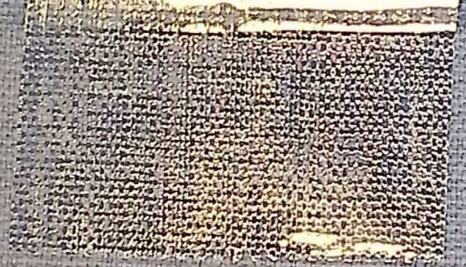
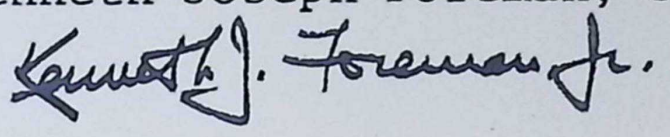


# THE DEBATE ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF MISSIONS LED BY JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1839 - 1861

by

Kenneth Joseph Foreman, Jr.



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# JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL

When the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1847 elected 34-year-old James Henley Thornwell to be the youngest Moderator of her history, his powers were acknowledged by all as unique. Mature as he was in them then, however, during the relatively quiet years in which we have been following the undramatic course of intermittent debate on the administration of missions in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Thornwell had continued to develop. He had become now a man of such stature that we run the risk of missing his true dimensions if we do not pause to take stock of them. Few so prominent in their own day are so little known in ours as he is, and the rumors of the man which pass for common knowledge of him today need correction by comparison with the sources.

By 1855 James Henley Thornwell was a preacher whose earlier fervor as a young man had gained in depth and height rather than dying down in the glow of youth lately spent. At the same time his strength of sheer architectonic logical persuasion had gained in breadth and majesty. Students of Thornwell manuscripts who have some attachment to Davidson College are aware that in 1837 the college

authorities had invited the young pastor to the brand new campus located in the bushes of the red clay of the northern reaches of Mecklenburg County in North Carolina. Basketball not having been invented, baseball not yet having been heard of, neither liquor nor women having yet been installed as approved fixtures on the campus, and both football and the glockenspiel still lying somewhere undreamed of on the reaches of time unborn, the center of Davidson College life in its opening year was unabashedly intellectual, rooted in the literary societies; and it was to these that Thornwell was invited to speak. It being his habit to prepare his thoughts beforehand, we have the manuscript of his address.[1] We know on good authority, however, that he never took this, or any other manuscript or barest note, into the lecture stand or pulpit.

Twenty years later the Presbyterian College of Davidson had Thornwell back to preach her baccalaureate. No trace of a manuscript of the sermon he brought on this occasion to the high ground between the Catawba and the Yadkin survives; but what has survived is an eye-and-earwitness account of that sermon, written down by a young man who, the year that Thornwell made his way to the banks of the Cumberland for our Presbyterian General Assembly of 1855, had been making his preparations to go to Davidson as a freshman.

Manuscripts of departed divines are common enough articles, but they seldom give us the man himself. When a student with a retentive mind is in the congregation and pays attention and later writes down what he saw and heard

---

[1] "An Address Delivered before the Literary Societies of Davidson College, N. C., on the first day of August, 1837." In the James Henley Thornwell[, Sr.,] Collection, the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina. MSS.

and felt, we are fortunate. This particular student, John Martin Philip Otts, by then a Junior, was present at Davidson when the by then renowned South Carolinian appeared on campus for the commencement exercises of 1858, and we are more than fortunate. Otts gives us something preserved nowhere else, a first-hand, concrete and vivid example of what, after 24 years in the gospel ministry, Thornwell was like in person, face to face.[2]

"He was at the same time the greatest and humblest man," Otts wrote after comparing Thornwell's mind to the towering loftiness of Mt. Washington among the other great mountains, high hills, and little elevations which surround the grandeur of his snow-crested summit. "He knew his superiority, but he was neither proud nor overbearing on account of it.

> When, in his patient researches and thorough investigations, he had reached conviction in his own mind, he spoke forth his words with the positiveness of one well assured, that truth was in his assertions, and he was tenacious in maintaining, and earnest in defending his own views against all opposition; but there was nothing like the boast of pride or self-glorification in either his speech or manner.

Otts first met James Henley Thornwell at Davidson College in 1858, when Thornwell came to preach the annual sermon before the graduating class. Otts was then a Junior.

---

[2]The direct and indirect quotations which follow are taken from an unpublished manuscript of John Martin Philip Otts, entitled Reminiscences of Doctor Thornwell, which is found in the James Henley Thornwell[, Sr.,] Collection at the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

He reports,

> For weeks previous, his coming was much talked of in the College, and the praises of the few who had heard him were so unbounded, that they seemed to the others excessive.[3]
>
> On the Sabbath preceding Commencement Day expectations [sto]od on tiptoe, and anticipations of a great sermon ran to the highest pitch. Hundreds were attracted to the College on that occasion to hear Dr. Thornwell, who otherwise would not have come so early in the Commencement week, and many, perhaps, who, but for the sake of hearing the sermon, would not have come at all.
>
> The large Chapel hall was crowded to overflowing long before the hour appointed for the service.

Many of these, Otts tells us, were there to hear the visitor for the first time, and Otts was one of them. Not having seen him prior to the actual hour of morning worship, Otts was in for a jolt.

> When he walked up the aisle our soul sank within us, so great was our disappointment in his personal appearance.
>
> He was in company with the President, who was a

---

[3]Thornwell's popularity with students has been briefly indicated earlier in a sampling of the invitations he received over a wide area to speak to them (above, p 95, Footnote 2.)

Further direct testimony to his appeal to young men is found in his election as an honorary member of numerous campus Literary Societies, including the Cliosophic Society of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. See J. Mills Cooke at Nassau Hall in Princeton to Rev. J[ames] H[enley] Thornwell in Columbia, Sept. 23, 1853. MSS, ALS. In the South Caroliniana Library of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, S. C.

> large and portly man of a prepossessing physique; and in the comparison the diminutive and youthful looking Thornwell appeared like a mere college-boy.

What Otts saw when Thornwell was seated on the rostrum was "a small man, very neatly but rather peculiarly dressed; a large, long head with a full, broad forehead; a prominent nose and sharp features; black, keen, piercing eyes, deeply set in the head and gazing out with a strange, fascinating look, that seemed to be penetrating, deep, deep down, into the hidden mysteries of things."

The Prayer of invocation, the lining out of the hymns, the scripture reading -- these did not seem to foreshadow the coming of any great sermon. Still, the reading accurately conveyed the sense. At the second prayer Otts could find nothing remarkable, except for one thing: "its spirit of deep humility. It impressed us with an awful sense of the infinite distance between God and man."

But now Thornwell announced his text, and began his sermon "in the same low, gutteral and rugged tones, and with almost every sentence his head made a quick jerk and a little nervous bow, and the constant motions of his hands and body" -- this before a congregation every man of which had been trained by the Literary Societies in the pleasing gestures of the orators of the age -- "were angular and ungraceful."

This beginning cast Otts down into the depths.

We are reminded, as we read his candid description of a man supposed to be at the height of powers, of the accounts of Abraham Lincoln given by those who travelled far to hear, for the first time, the man whose reputation as a debater was soon to spread far beyond the circle of his local orbit,

and who were struck by the awkwardness of the man as he began to speak.

> We could not put back the fear, [Otts confesses,] that the great man, for one time in his life, was about to make a failure.
>
> That feeling never again came upon us, when we saw Dr. Thornwell rise to deliver a lecture or a sermon.
>
> In less than five minutes all ruggedness had left his voice, all angularity had departed from his motions, and all sharpness had disappeared from his countenance.
>
> His voice began to roll out in rich, round, full, and swelling tones, harmonizing with the majestic rise and sublime flow of the grandest and most massive thoughts.
>
> His theme was "The Love of Truth;" and as the subject of discourse took posession of his soul, it seemed to control the movements of his body. His gestures became regular, graceful, and expressive. In the gathering and growing enthusiasm that blazed out in his delivery, he would rise on his tip-toes, and, elevating his arms above his head in a most graceful curve, the little man seemed to grow into the stature of Hercules, and the rough voice began to speak with the eloquence of Mercury, and its words were full of the deep wisdom of Minerva; ---

-- and then, Otts says,

> --- and then the great soul came up into his face, and looked out through the sparkling eyes, and the whole countenance flamed out into a burning fire of enthusiasm, that glowed like the molten iron in the smelting furnace.
>
> The earnestness and zeal of his delivery were irresistible and overpowering, and inattention to his words was simply an impossibility.
>
> Entranced in the magic of his peculiar eloquence, and spell-bound in the iron convictions of his irrefragable logic, his audience was swept down the majestic stream of his discourse, and carried forward to the full extent of his own conclusions.

Otts is no poor struggler after words himself. His summary of the effect of a Thornwell sermon is something to remember in its own right:

> In the rough, deep guttural tones, and sharp angular motions of the beginning, and in the deep, still, majestic flow of thought in the progress and then in the broad, clear, sublime, and overwhelming truths established in the conclusion, his sermon might be compared to a bold and dashing mountain stream, leaping over the rocky crags down the steep and rugged declivity, and then rolling into a broad, deep, and majestic river, down through the green and fruitful valley, and finally spreading itself out into an unfathomable and shoreless sea, clear as crystal and beautiful as the sky.

"We sat in motionless and rapt attention," Otts remembers, "till, at the end of an hour, he ceased to speak, and the tones of his voice died away upon our ears like the gradually discontinuing murmur of receding waves."

This would be impressive enough, one would think; but the simple fact is that the ebb and swell of pure oratory was only the smallest part of Thornwell's power to hold the attention of a congregation and get through to it. It was the content which carried Thornwell's true dynamite.

> That sermon[, Otts reports, --- and how many other sermons delivered at Baccalaureate time since the world began have ever had this said of them? ---] was a turning-point in our educational career, and a stepping-stone to higher and better things.
>
> "The love of truth" was the theme, and with irrefragable logic the preacher proved, that men must not only have their expressions to correspond with the reality of their convictions, but must also go deeper, and be assured that their convictions correspond with the reality of things.
>
> In regard to truth itself, before hearing that sermon, we had only held to one half of the truth.

> Ever since we have been more patient and thorough in our investigations, more slow in the formation of our opinions, and more cautious not to give expression to any unsettled convictions.

The proof of a sermon, as every preacher knows, is not in the preaching, and not in the hearing, but in the change, the permanent inner change, in the hearer. Here was Otts, a debater of the debaters after three years in the campus which centered on Phi and Eu Halls, and now with one sermon from James Henley Thornwell in his soul:

> We have always been fond of debate, and up to the hearing of that sermon we had been in the habit of debating in our literary society on whichever side of a question we happened to be assigned; and oftentimes we defended, after the style of lawyers, points and principles which we did not believe to be true.
>
> That sermon convinced us, that such a practice is wrong and full of hurtful tendencies.

With a press like this, one might think, a man like Thornwell would do well to concentrate on a series of one-night stands. To face the same people, the same congregation, over and over again, after an opening effort like the one Otts describes, would expose even great preachers to the disasters of anti-climax, and would bring even the greatest to inevitable later unfavorable comparison. On this point we are again fortunate in Otts. The next year he finished at Davidson, and the year after that he enrolled at Columbia Theological Seminary, where he took advantage of his opportunity to hear Thornwell every Sunday at the Presbyterian Church.

Looking back to this sermon he heard at Davidson, it was the greatest he had ever heard or heard of in all his

life up to that point. Yet Otts tells us,

> That sermon may be taken as an example of all the other sermons, that we afterwards heard from the wonderful preacher. Great as it was[,] we never heard Dr. Thornwell preach one inferior to it during the whole of the three years of our regular attendance on his ministry.
>
> We heard many from him much beyond it in the sublimity of conception, and in the eloquence of his earnest and fervid delivery.
>
> He never made a failure.

"People seldom wept under his preaching," Otts testifies, "but they were convinced."

> He preached to the people. We never heard him read a sermon.
>
> He went into the pulpit with a divine message, and he spoke it to the people, and they did not soon forget it.[4]

Not every man who does well in public wears well in private. Again we are fortunate in Otts, who confirms what we hear from all others who report on Thornwell's more personal and intimate contacts. Invited to the parlor by the President to meet the baccalaureate preacher, young Otts the Davidson Junior went forward with some misgivings.

"Imagine our very agreeable surprise," he reports,

---

[4]The emphasis in these two paragraphs is on preach in contrast to read; Thornwell preached, he never read; Thornwell spoke the divine message to the people. Here James Henley Thornwell is in the strong line of John Knox of Scotland, who established and maintained his reformer's power in large part by powerful preaching and who only once in his life wrote out a sermon, and that after, not before, it was preached.

"when we found the great man in his parlor talk as playful as a minnow in shallow water."

Otts never felt ill at ease again in Thornwell's presence. Embarrassment was "simply an impossibility."

Otts's testimony of Thornwell's humility, as being more than equal to his greatness, is uniform with that of all those who knew him. It comes out in Thornwell's regular preaching to what the world then, as now, considers obscure Gallilean corners little worth the attention of able men. Writing from the back country of the Lancaster District, then as now scarcely populated by the prominent, Thornwell in 1850 was telling his friend Professor Williams, "I am engaged in preaching every Sunday. We have several big meetings projected here, in which I am to take part.... I sincerely trust that the outpouring of the Spirit may be universal."[5] This was when he was on his badly needed vacation from the crushing grind of the College.

Through the years, we find that the purpose he formed in his first pastorate, of responding to the calls of his fellow-ministers to hold evangelistic meetings with them at their charges in the destitute and difficult small churches they served, had not been dimmed by his rise to a seat among the prominent, the wealthy and the powerful.[6]

This commitment to preaching with all his powers to

---

[5] J[ames] H[enley] Thornwell to Matthew J. Williams, July 17, 1850, as carried in Palmer, Life of JHT, p 342.

[6] See for example the letter of Cyrus Johnston to James Henley Thornwell, August 15, 1858, in which Johnston inquires about Thornwell's coming to preach the Camp Meeting, and asks if Thornwell can preach on the Unity

high and low alike stemmed from his profound, life-long commitment to the Gospel of salvation offered in Jesus Christ to dying men in a dying world. As the debate on mission administration gathered fresh momentum in the years from 1855 to 1860, the Thornwell who renewed the debate was the James Henley Thornwell who would preach to college students and to the city congregation in Columbia with the impact we have seen in John Martin Philip Otts.

The year the Assembly met for the first time in the capital of wealth, influence, sophistication and power, New York City, out of all the preachers available across the nation, the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America would ask this James Henley Thornwell to preach their Anniversary Sermon for Presbyterian Foreign Missions at the General Assembly. Presbyterian General Assemblies, take them by and large, are hardened bodies; but Thornwell would preach there before the elite of the elite on The Sacrifice of Christ, the Type and Model of Missionary Effort, with such power that the Assembly wept and Henry Ward Beecher would say, "Dr. Thornwell was the most brilliant minister in the Old School Presbyterian Church, and the most brilliant debater in its General Assembly. This reputation he early gained and never lost. Whenever he was present in the Assembly, he was always the first person pointed out to a stranger."[7]

---

of the Church in order to offset a Baptist sermon which was on that topic but which solved the question of Christian unity by maintaining that the Baptist was the only true church. "[Y]ou will have crowds to hear you," Johnston tells Thornwell. In the James Henley Thornwell[, Sr.,] Collection, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina. MSS.

[7]In the Independent, as quoted in Wilson's Presbyterian

This is the same James Henley Thornwell who, in a time when harsh voices of both science and religion were claiming that black men were not men, would preach to a church crowded with slaves, and he would apply Scripture to black men and white men as men, both as under the command and judgment of God.[8] This debater James Henley Thornwell is the same man who would preach to black and to white and to the back country, wherever the way opened up by the invitation of those who needed him.

But all this was not, for Thornwell -- as it is for most of us in the 20th Century who preach, or do whatever it is that we do, for respectable honoraria under comfortable circumstances to pleasant people near roads and airports easy to get to with our health well taken care of, -- it was not for Thornwell an offering to the Lord which cost him nothing. "The truth is," he wrote to his friend after preaching his heart out in a series of country meetings in

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Historical Almanac for 1863, p 211.

Dr. Addison Alexander, known to all his generation as a preacher of outstanding eloquence, said that Thornwell's Anniversary Sermon at the General Assembly of 1856 "realized his idea of what preaching should be." (Palmer, Life of JHT, p 417.)

[8]This is the famous sermon, "The Rights and the Duties of Masters," preached at the dedication of Zion Church in Charleston. Taken by title, and weighed in the moral balances of the Twentieth Century, it is fully as wanting as many a sermon and pronouncement of the Twentieth Century will appear when taken by title and weighed in the moral balances of later generations of Christian enlightenment. A prime lesson to be learned from it, however, is that Thornwell as a minister of the Gospel felt that wherever men were, there it was a privilege to open up the Scriptures and apply them to life as best the minister could, knowing that he was an earthen vessel but holding back the treasure from no man.

the steaming South Carolina August of 1850, "I have returned from each pretty thoroughly broken down.

> My labours, at the first, left me in a state of prostration from which I apprehended serious results; but, through the mercy of God, my system has recovered its usual tone.
>
> For two days I was occasionally spitting blood; my chest was very sore, and my voice very feeble. But I have not only recovered my health, but have received gratifying tokens that the labours which exhausted me have been a blessing to others.
>
> One can afford to be broken down, when his decay is the life of others.[9]

It may be thought easy to stand in the presence of multitudes and proclaim one's idea of truth, whether to rustics and bondslaves whose inferiority and admiration are obvious, or to the rich, the influential and the intellectual, whose captivity to the orator and whose adulation are all the more encouraging to a man who has the gift to hold and move them. The convictions of the Christian meet a harder test, most of us agree, when the audience is but one and the one who testifies must bear his witness one to one. We cannot know and understand the leader of the debate on the administration of missions in the Presbyterian Church in the United States during the period 1839-1861 without knowing where he was and how he stood when all the flash of public life was dimmed; when what passed for the convictions of his heart in crowded Assembly and circulated journal faced the test of direct, lonely personal encounter. This is the encounter which risks all, because in losing it loses clearly, at all the price of intimate personal failure.

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[9] J[ames] H[enley] Thornwell to Matthew J. Williams, August 26, 1850, as carried in Palmer, Life of JHT, p 342. Paragraphing supplied.

We have a way to know Thornwell in this personal dimension. Most men find a fence around the great public figures of their time, and intrude into their inmost private lives not at all. This is a high fence, and only those who have begun life with no family connections, no fortune, no background as the world sees it, no assured place or standing, can ever know the iron height of that fence as it is felt by those who from earliest days have had to stand, as Thornwell stood, almost entirely on the new, unrevered ground given the man or woman who enters life as a lone individual parcel of gifts and abilities, great or small, which must make their way on their own. To essay to pass that fence which guards the great is never easy. It is hardest of all for those who were born into families which hold none of the passkeys. We can form an idea of the ultimate springs of Thornwell's life as we consider how he met personally the demands of the Great Commission when all the fences were up and no easy, everyday path could lead from heart to heart.

We can do this without speculation thanks to a letter which survives in the Library of the Virginia Historical Society.[10]

William Campbell Preston, son of the William Preston whose life-long friendship with George Washington grew out of

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[10] J[ames] H[enley] Thornwell at South Carolina College to the Honorable W[illiam] C[ampbell] Preston in Columbia, August 6th, 1846. Original MSS ALS as received by Preston. In the Library of the Virginia Historical Society.

Draft MSS ALS in the South Caroliniana Library of the University of South Carolina, compared with the above, shows how Thornwell developed his careful treatment of his approach and appeal to Preston.

their companionship in several expeditions of exploration to the west, was born in Philadelphia in 1794. Virginian of the Virginians, he was forced south for his education on account of health. As he began the practice of law he was forced abroad for the same reason, where he became a close friend of Washington Irving and accompanied him on walking tours of Scotland, northern England and Wales, which emerged to the world in Irving's Sketch-Book.

Settling in South Carolina in 1822 when Thornwell was nine years old, Preston entered a brilliant forensic career, leading in 1836 to his election to the United States Senate, where though a nephew of Patrick Henry he was a prominent ornament of that body in his own right at a time when his colleagues included men of the calibre of Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster. Differing with both Calhoun and his constitutents on Van Buren's policy, Preston resigned from the Senate in 1842 and returned to the private practice of law in Columbia, from which he was called in 1845 to be President of the State's most honored institution, the College of South Carolina. The faculty he headed there, as we know, included the young professor of Moral Philosphhy and Christian Evidences, James Henley Thornwell.

Within the year Preston's mother dies. William Campbell Preston, 52 years old, is at the height of his powers, possessed of every connection and honor which a region built on connection and honor can offer. He is in the process of making the South Carolina College the most prominent and popular educational institution in the South. He is a profound classical scholar, 18 years Thornwell's senior and his President, urbane, polished; and he is not a Christian.

Here is the letter which now rests with the papers of

the Preston family at The Virginia Historical Society.

[To the Hon W. C. Preston]

South Carolina College
August 6th 1846.

My very Dear Sir,

I see from the papers that you have again been called, in the Providence of God, to taste the bitteress of grief.

Though, in ordinary cases, the affliction with which you have been visited, is one which takes us less by surprise than any other form of bereavement, yet in your case, the event I learn, has been wholly unexpected, so that the severity of the stroke has been greatly augmented by the suddenness of the shock. Your feelings, under such circumstances, I can readily conceive; and nothing but profound veneration for the sacredness of your grief has prevented me from disturbing the solitude which such sorrows always court, and expressing, in person, what, in the freshness of your calamity, it would, perhaps, have been no relief to receive, my sympathy and condolence. Be assured, my dear Sir, that my heart has been with you, and my prayers and my tears both freely accompanied you when I saw you descend into the house of mourning.

Your tenderest associations are already linked with the grave, or rather, they are tied to Heaven. A sainted sister, a cherished daughter, and now she who nursed your infancy are there before you. Death is no unfamiliar subject, and the hopes of a future life, I trust, no strange theme.

The remainder of our flesh is the forcible and beautiful language in which the Hebrew writers are accustomed to designate our kindred and relatives. It is an expression true to nature. We feel them to be a portion of ourselves. Our hearts pursue them in the grave; the sod which conceals their bodies cannot interrupt our communion with their spirits. They live in our memories. They revive in our hopes. I know from your own affectionate nature and from the tender relations which they bore to you that those whom God has

taken from you were felt to be, in a preeminent sense, part and parcel of your being -- they were indeed the remainder of your flesh. And does not this consideration, my dear Sir, suggest a new incentive for cherishing a strong attachment to Heaven and for giving all diligence to acquire that love to the Saviour which will secure reunion with your friends? If Jesus possess not the same attractions for you which He does for His saints, so that you desire to be absent from the body in order to be present with the Lord -- if His presence and glory are not sufficient to wean your heart from all sublimary good and commend His rest to your affections, yet, as nature yearns to be joined again to the departed, you must feel impelled to turn your eyes to Him as the way, the truth and the life. The loved ones of your soul beckon you to Him and through Him, to their own society and to everlasting blessedness. The Providence of God is designed to give emphasis to the calls of His grace -- and afflictions fail of their end which do not conduct us to Him who bore our sickness and carried our sorrows.

If you will pardon the liberty which I take -- for I can assure you that what I shall say is dictated by the sincerest friendship and accompanied by the warmest prayers -- I will frankly state my apprehension, that you are prone, from the very nature of your mind and the character of your past pursuits, to fortify your heart rather with the lessons of philosophy than the promises of God. But if it is the purpose of your Heavenly Father to lead you to Himself -- if He has taken the remainder of your flesh as an earnest of the mercy in reserve -- is it not as ungrateful as it is rebellious, to seek consolation in bereavement, from the topicks of this world's wisdom while the exhaustless treasures of Divine love are before you? Who would be content with heathen fortitude when the jewel of Christian patience may be won? The Dicipline of philosophy may engender a dogged submission to calamity, but can never give the victory which overcometh the world. It is the distinguishing glory of the Gospel to brace the soul against the pressure of ill -- to subdue sorrow -- to conquer death -- to rejoice in tribulation. He alone whose heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, shall not be afraid of evil tidings, since he knows that all things must work together for good to them that love God. You may rely upon it, my dear Sir, that there is comfort, pure and sweet, in the love of the Father, the grace of the Son and the communion of the blessed Spirit. There are consolations, rich and abundant, in the promises of

the new and everlasting covenant -- a joy, unspeakable and full of glory, even in the midst of fiery trials to those who believe in the Saviour. This joy I am anxious for you to feel. In the eye of your Christian friends there is but one thing you lack -- and that one thing would impart a new grace to your splendid abilities -- give new fervour to your eloquence and shed a diviner lustre upon the commanding station which you occupy.

The whole dispensation under which we are placed is a dispensation of mercy and the tendency of all its arrangements is to conduct to Jesus as the only Saviour of men. Prosperity and adversity -- blessings and afflictions -- all speak the same language -- <u>believe and be saved</u>.

In your case, I cannot but feel that this language has been most solemn and emphatic. The prejudices which a mind like yours would be likely to entertain against evangelical religion have been signally forestalled by the testimony of those whom <u>you</u> most loved and all men were bound to respect. You have <u>seen</u> its reality -- you have witnessed its power. You <u>know</u> that there is such a thing as a change of heart -- such a blessing as justification by free grace -- for you have the personal assurance of those whose faith God commands you to follow. I trust that you will obey His voice. He has allured you by prosperity -- enabling you to achieve for yourself "a name which posterity will not willingly let die" -- <u>All</u> venerate you -- multitudes love you and God commands you to give the glory to Him. He has once and again called you by afflictions and all your afflictions point you directly to Heaven. Oh that He may now call you effectually by His grace and make you indeed a partaker of His Son! To His blessed Spirit I commend you -- and wherever you go, my affections and my prayers shall go with you -- and if it should be the will of God that we meet no more on earth (for thousands have run a shorter course than ours) let us endeavour to meet, on the great day, at the right hand of the Judge, where all tears shall be wiped away and sorrow and sighing no more known.

With the sincerest Christian Sympathy
and love Most truly yrs

Hon. W. C. Preston. J. H. Thornwell

This example of Thornwell's personal evangelism may serve not only as a measure of the conviction and commitment

of its writer, but also as a measure of the change in the inner orientation of Presbyterian faculty leadership on college and seminary campus between 1846 and 1976; and thus also as a measure of the gap the scholar of the 1970s must bridge within himself before he can begin to understand Presbyterians of the 19th Century and their ground of being.

But this is not all.

As Thornwell emerges into mature leadership of the debate against Presbyterian church Boards we shall find him sent by his Presbytery as a Commissioner to every General Assembly from 1855 through 1860, with the single exception of 1858 when the two Benjamins, Palmer and Smith, made up the difference.

At this national level, as the acknowledged master of debate, as the first figure pointed out to a stranger, we shall find Thornwell calling for radical change in the Presbyterian approach to what all agreed lay at the heart of the nature and the calling of the church.

We have already seen that his program, initiated originally by Robert Jefferson Breckinridge in the wake of his successful revolution and reform, and applied in detail to the actual church at her working level by John Calkins Coit, calls on the one hand for the keenest intellectual and spiritual vision to see past immediate pragmatic expediency to the heart of the Christian's responsibility and the Presbyterian's way of meeting it.

We have seen also that Thornwell's program calls on the other hand for more than mere visionary theorizing. To abandon the physical, existing, operating Ur of the Chaldees and strike out for the uncivil northwest required from

Abraham more than vision and insight. It also required physical courage in the man, a willingness in him to be up front where things could go fatally wrong. To abandon the physical, existing, operating Boards of the Church and strike out for a quality of life in the Presbyterian connection which would make her Sessional and Presbyterial parliaments living organs of a vibrant Christian life and testimony, likewise called for something of a physical courage in every Presbyterian, a willingness to be up front where things could go fatally wrong.

Lord Charnwood remarks of Abraham Lincoln that the honesty of a man who builds his entire political reputation on honesty must be prepared to undergo searching scrutiny. Charnwood then proceeds to give Lincoln that scrutiny to a degree which less honest men might have been spared. As Charnwood rightly tests the honesty of the man who invited trust on the basis of his own honesty, no assessment of Thornwell and his program can rightly be made without testing not only the inner spiritual commitment, but also the practical physical courage of the leader who calls for a whole church to have commitment and courage enough to abandon all her benevolent institutions and take a course where permanent death, not merely a transient physical death, may become a reality if they have blundered and things go fatally wrong in the very house of God. This leader is no man to follow on such a course if in the end he is at heart no more than an academic.

We have tested James Henley Thornwell's spiritual commitment at several levels, and found a heart aflame.

What then of his courage?

Any thoughtful appraisal of James Henley Thornwell, in

addition to taking into account the inner orientation of his spirit, must also weigh carefully the following incident. Dramatic though it is, every person who knew the man agrees that it is typical of what he was, of what he could do, and of absolutely fundamental elements in his character.

To understand what happened, we need to recall the fact that American students of the mid-19th Century were riotous and unruly to a degree eclipsing what a more effete age would consider unprecedented in its campus unrests of the 1960s. The students at South Carolina College were an exception only in the sense of surpassing with pride the national average. The sophomore at Hampden-Sydney in 1940 who when bombed by a paper bag full of water whipped out his pistol and fired a fast shot through the second-floor window at the leading wits of the Junior class put a quick end to their target practice even though he hit them with nothing worse than broken glass; but he was thought hasty and eccentric. Eighty-five years earlier at South Carolina College in Columbia he would have been a normal fixture of the landscape. He would have been from South Carolina, not Texas.

Here is the incident.

"It occurred," Benjamin Morgan Palmer reports, "in the year 1856," two years after Thornwell had resigned the presidency of South Carolina College to become Professor of Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, located then in Columbia.

> One or two of the young men, in a night frolic, came into collision with the town police, one being finally arrested and incarcerated. This, of course, brought the whole College to the rescue, who succeeded in liberating their companion.
>
> The next day two of the students resolved to avenge

> the insult by an open attack upon the offending policeman, and in short time the town was in commotion. The students rushed to the scene of conflict, with such arms as they could extemporize. The alarm-bell was rung, and the militia called out to oppose them.
>
> The two parties were drawn up in array, as in regular battle; and a single pistol shot would have been the signal for a massacre, that would have carried mourning into the best families of the State, and stained the soil of Columbia with the blood of the proudest sons of the Commonwealth.[11]

Here are the students, here is the well-armed and well-regulated militia; here is Kent State waiting for the signal for the massacre.

"Gentlemen of the highest character stood and walked between the combatants," Palmer continues, "vainly entreating the students to retire from the conflict."

As President of the College, as President of Kent State, where would you have sent for help in the midst of such a scene? And no scene, but the actual suicide of your students about to take place before you as they invite their own massacre by armed defenders of public order?

In Columbia of South Carolina in 1856, if you could have kept your head long enough to remember your resources, you

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[11] The quotation and those which follow are from B[enjamin] M[organ] Palmer, The Life and Letters of James Henley Thornwell, D. D., LL. D., Ex-President of the South Carolina College, Late Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary at Columbia, South Carolina, pp 394-396. Additional paragraphing supplied.

> Palmer adduces this and two other incidents as illustrations of Thornwell's reputation for uncompromising honesty and fairness, qualities involved in the modern favorite virtue called integrity. His hold on students, Palmer reports, rested on their knowledge of his complete honesty.

would have been better off than was any college or university president in the American 1960s -- though as a child of the Twentieth Century you would have been unlikely to have thought of where to turn. We can be reasonably sure that the last place you would have sent to was your nearest Theological Seminary, and that the last man you would have sent for there was its Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, engaged at that actual moment in lecturing on the same.

Not so in Columbia. Men there knew what to do. "A runner was dispatched for Dr. Thornwell," the report tells us, "who was at the moment lecturing to his class in the Theological Seminary."

Called to the riot, Thornwell wasted no time.

> Moving rapidly between the contending ranks, he addressed the students in substance thus:
>
> "I know nothing of the origin of this trouble, and this is no place to make the inquiry. Come back with me to the campus; and if I find you are in the right, and there be no redress but in fighting, I will lead you myself, and die in the midst of you."
>
> Turning upon his heels, and shouting, "College! College!" he walked in the direction of the campus, followed by the entire body.
>
> After getting them in the chapel, he addressed them at length, representing the impropriety of such riotous demonstrations; and appealing to their magnanimity not to bring a stain upon the escutcheon of the College, which would make the State blush that she had created it.

They had followed him because they knew that if he said he would lead them himself and die in the midst of them if there were no redress but in fighting, he would do it; they listened to him in the Chapel because what he had to say came through with transparent honesty and made sense. The aroused

passions finally calmed down. Peace returned to town and campus.

"It is not at all unsafe to say," the historian concludes,

> that he was the only man in South Carolina who could have achieved that thing.
>
> The cry thoughout the town was for days afterwards, "Wonderful man! But for him, our town would have been stained with a crime which would have made it the horror of the State."

As we come, then, to the quickening of our debate on the administration of missions within the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as the nation winds slowly up to the pitch of rebellion and civil war, the leader we measure is James Henley Thornwell, who in our times is dealt with as primarily an academic.

We see, as his character and the character of the debate have unfolded, that any picture of Thornwell as primarily academic is far from the mark. No man who three times flees the university, who spends himself in evangelistic preaching in forgotten places to forgotten men at the literal cost of his life's blood, and who sees his President William Campbell Preston as Thornwell saw William Campbell Preston, can be dealt with realistically as primarily an academic. No man who can enter the heart of a rioting mob and walk out with a cry on his lips like that of Henry IV at the breach on St. Crispin's Day, and have the mob follow him into paths of peace, can possibly be dealt with as primarily an academic.

James Henley Thornwell is a man of ideas and a man of logic, it is true. Today we meet his ideas and his logic on the pages of old books and magazines and newspapers and

letters and packets of notes and files; but these are rooted in and are the expression of a man whose ultimate character and ultimate commitment are as far removed from cold antiseptic detached ideation and mere logical rationality as zenith from nadir, as day from night.

To think that the center of James Henley Thornwell is chiefly academic is to fancy that fire is ashes.

To miss this is to miss entirely both the scope of his logic and the true leverage of his mind.

We return now to his ideas and his logic, better equipped to see both him and them.

## THE TWO-LEVEL ATTACK

We are now able to stand back from the debate in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America between 1839 and 1861 on the administration of missions and take note of an important fact which has been obscured in the intervening years.

We may note that analysis of the debate to this point shows that James Henley Thornwell, following in the original pattern laid down by Robert Jefferson Breckinridge and Benjamin Mosby Smith who in 1839-1840 broke the first public ground in the debate,[1] attacks the ecclesiastical Boards for Presbyterian benevolent work on two distinct levels.

The first level, the one which defenders of the Boards emphasize in their counter-attacks, is found in Thornwell's denunciation of the Boards root and branch as excrescences on the Presbyterian system, which prevent that system from working and, becoming the church's masters, will destroy the Presbyterian system of church government.[2]

This is a radical, liberal, reformation-type position. It is seen most clearly, expounded most completely, and held

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[1] See above, pp 70-92.

[2] See above, p 138.

most tenaciously, by James Henley Thornwell.[3]

It is this first-level, radical, reformation-type position which John Calkins Coit adopts as handmaid to his own equally radical, reformation-type position on an independent prophetic ministry at home and abroad which Coit with his Committee of Harmony Presbytery develops and proposes as the necessary concomitant of Thornwell's radical attack on the Boards.[4] Since Thornwell's position presumes and implies but does not explicitly elaborate on such a ministry, Coit's position makes it possible to understand how and why Thornwell's proposal to abolish the Boards without replacing them with similar machinery is not the chimera which Thomas Smyth calls it,[5] but is rather a call to major restructuring on a scale as breath-taking as that attempted by the leaders of the Protestant Reformation. It is a call for contemporary revolutionary return to the simplicity and power of New Testament Christianity embodied in a New-Testament-style church unmarred by the roccoco improvements of the confident ingenuities of any later age[6] -- including the confident ingenuities of contemporary Presbyterians.

On his first level, then, we have seen that Thornwell proposes to get rid of the Boards entirely. His diagnosis of the Boards in our terms is that they are a malignant cancer

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[3]See below, pp 548-578.

[4]See above, pp 244-312.

[5]See above, p 156.

[6]See above, p 274.

which, before they work out their inherent destiny and destroy the church, must while they are still small be simply cut out and destroyed. In his terms they are fungi, excrescences, deadly monsters; they must be crushed in their infancy ere they become our masters and we become their slaves.[7]

This first level of attack, and the resulting proposal that the Boards simply be eliminated, from start to finish is Thornwell's unwavering first choice.

Obscured, however, by the upsetting shock effect of such a radical diagnosis and program, is Thornwell's second level of attack on the Boards, also following the general pattern laid down by Breckinridge and Smith in 1839-1840.[8]

In our terms, Thornwell's second level of attack may be compared to a program of palliative treatment for a malignancy which the patient is unwilling to have removed by surgery. The tumor is painful, it is unsightly, it interferes with walking. In spots it is already decaying; it smells. For each of these particular symptoms there is a treatment or an appliance which will at least make the interim before inevitable death more bearable, and may even

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[7] See above, p 138.

To tolerate, ignore or endure them is intellectually on the level of the late departed citizen on whose tombstone stands inscribed:

IN HIS COMA
HE SAID THAT AFTER ALL
IT WAS BUT A SMALL
MELANOMA

[8] See above, pp 71-92.

postpone death long enough for the patient to come to his senses. By submitting to palliative measures he may finally bring himself to agree to the radical surgery which alone can actually save his life.

On this second level Thornwell and the opponents of Boards propose a program of what in their view is merely palliative reform, and which far from being radical is simply the least that decency requires.

Viewed as a whole, the diagnoses and cures -- reforms -- on each level appear as follows:

LEVEL I. Radical Reform

A. Diagnosis: Boards kill the church by destroying her government and by preventing the church -- her courts, her officers and her members -- from carrying out their evangelistic and benevolent responsibilities.

B. Radical Reform: Abolish the Boards.

LEVEL II. Palliative Reforms

A. Diagnosis: Boards entail revolting symptoms.

B. Palliative Reform: At least do something about the symptoms.

1. a. Diagnosis: Board membership can be bought.

b. Palliative Reform: Abolish paid memberships and have all Board members appointed directly by the General Assembly.

2. a. Diagnosis: Board offices can be bought.

b. Palliative Reform: Abolish all paid honary directorships and the like.

3. a. Diagnosis: Boards raise funds by Agents who

promote special offerings.

b. Palliative Reform: Get rid of the Agents and introduce Systematic Benevolence into the church, whereby giving is made a part of worship and Presbyterians have an opportunity to give at every service of worship.

4. a. Diagnosis: Boards are large bodies on the order of a hundred members, most of whom never attend.

b. Palliative Reform: Cut the size of Boards down to that of actual working groups -- at least as small as 24, preferably 15, 12, or 9.

5. a. Diagnosis: Boards are an intermediate shield between the General Assembly and the small Executive Committee which actually supervises the staff.

b. Palliative Reform: Carry out Step 4 above, and then abolish the Executive Committees; or abolish the Boards and replace them by the Executive Committees now made directly responsible to the General Assembly.

6. a. Diagnosis: Boards are self-perpetuating bodies and thus concentrate power in the hands of a few.

b. Palliative Reform: Place Board membership on a term basis.

7. a. Diagnosis: Boards are interlocking bodies and thus concentrate power in the hands of a few.

b. Palliative Reform: Make it a rule of General Assembly elections that a man may serve on only one Board at a time.

8. a. Diagnosis: Boards because of transportation practicalities must be made up of members located nearby;

Boards are all in Philadelphia and thus concentrate power in the hands of a few.

b. Palliative Reform: Place the Boards in different centers in different regions of the church.

9. a. Diagnosis: Boards of Domestic Missions run evangelistic work in Presbyteries, supplanting Presbytery planning and Presbytery control of ordained ministers.

b. Palliative Reform: In the work of evangelists within the bounds of existing Presbyteries, confine the Board of [Domestic] Missions to financial matters only.

10. a. Diagnosis: Boards are bad news and should be abolished:

b. Palliative Reform: Establish no new Boards additional to those already existing.

The Twentieth Century observer will immediately notice three things about this second-level program:

1. By examining the symptoms for which the palliative reforms of Level II were proposed, we are able to picture more clearly the actual nature of the Board system as it existed in the period 1839-1861.

2. Some of the palliative reforms proposed in Level II have by 1977 been adopted for so long that we are astounded to discover that they did not arrive in the Ark. We take them for granted. We did not realize that when proposed as reforms by the Thornwell / Breckinridge group, they were greeted with hostility and adopted only gradually or later.

3. Some of the palliative reforms which were adopted

have in recent years been abandoned.[9]

With this review and analysis of the two-level program of attack and remedy, we can return to the scene of the ongoing debate better equipped to sort out both the intent of the arguments and the practical effect of the actions.

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[9]With what wisdom, it would be impolitic to question and uncharitable to debate.

## SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE: PALLIATIVE REVOLUTION

When Benjamin Morgan Palmer wrote of his best friend, James Henley Thornwell, that his principles of action were settled, not left to be gathered up in the hurry of an emergency amid the dust and strife of debate, but antecedently determined, he wrote accurately of the man he knew intimately.[1] From his first letters of the early 1840s until his last essay in rebuttal to Charles Hodge, "The Princeton Review and Presbyterianism," in The Southern Presbyterian Review of January, 1862, Thornwell's principles concerning the Board question were clearly established and firmly adhered to.

We are in a position to illustrate one of the most striking examples of this characteristic by means of a letter which is preserved in the Library of the senior Union Theological Seminary. It sets forth Thornwell's views with his usual force and clarity, and shows that his position on how the church should raise funds to support her enterprises was fully developed as early as 1842.[2]

We recall that as we entered the period, immediately

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[1] Palmer, Life of JHT, p 558.

[2] See below, pp 444-446.

following the Old School - New School disruption of 1837-1838, we were taken aback to discover that nowhere in the entire Presbyterian Church was there an offering taken as a part of the regular worship services of the church. Such funds as the members supplied for the support of their pastor and the maintenance of their church building, they put up by pew rentals or in the form of annual subscriptions, to be paid as available or needed, by what were nearly private transactions.[3]

Such funds as the members supplied for the Boards and institutions of their denomination, on the other hand, the members gave in the form of free-will offerings taken up at the exhortation of travelling Agents of the Boards and institutions, or gave to the Agents directly by subscription when approached personally, much as funds are raised today for building projects for schools and colleges.

On this matter Thornwell had reached firm and detailed conclusions by the end of 1841. Shortly thereafter, early in the new year, he had a letter from the Reverend William Henry Foote, the North Carolina and Virginia pastor whose sketches of the early history of Presbyterian ministers and churches in those two states are our primary, often our only, source for much of what happened for decades as Presbyterians worked their way southward from the middle Atlantic colonies and states.

Foote was the moving light in the Central Board of Foreign Missions, organ of the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina and auxiliary to the General Assembly's Board of Foreign Missions. Thornwell's reply is a perfect example of

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[3]See above, p 19.

his ability to form a clear picture in his own mind early, to express it concisely, to send it out to carry or lose the day on its own merits, and to hold fast to it thereafter.[4] He writes,

To the Rev.d William Henry Foote
Petersburgh
Virginia

South Carolina College
Feb 11th
1842

Rev. & Dear Sir,

I received your letter of the 19th January a few days ago, calling my attention to the various plans of collecting funds for benevolent purposes, detailed in the appendix to the Eighth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Central Board of Foreign Missions.

It is true, as you suppose, that I have thought much upon the subject, and the result of all my reflections is a confirmed conviction of the excellence, wisdom and efficiency of the provisions contained in our Form of Government.

Instead of taxing their own ingenuity to invent schemes for themselves, I think that our churches and sessions would do far better to adopt and carry out the scheme which is evidently proposed in our book.

This scheme has the advantage of being scriptural and therefore, we may expect that the Divine blessing will attend it.

It is, moreover, exceedingly simple and requires nothing in order to its success but love to God and His kingdom in the earth. I shall content myself with stating it and leave you to compare it with the plans to

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[4] J[ames] H[enley] Thornwell at South Carolina College to William Henry Foote in Petersburgh, Virginia, February 11, 1842. Archival File, Union Theological Seminary Library, Richmond, Virginia. MSS.

which you have invited my attention.

1. Collections for the poor and other pious purposes is one of the standing ordinances of God's house. In the seventh chapter of our Form of Government it is classed with prayer, preaching and the administration of the sacraments. It is, therefore, a matter of Divine authority. When we appear before the Lord, we are not at liberty to appear empty. The free-will offering of our substance must accompany the spiritual sacrifices of the heart. Every man is bound to lay by in store for the Lord's purposes as God hath prospered him.

Let this matter be treated and insisted on as a Divine ordinance --- as an established part of our worship --- as a fixed institution in the Gospel, and we have advanced the first step and that upon Scriptural grounds.

2. There must be officers to attend to the ordinance; and accordingly we find that the New Testament points out Deacons as the secular agents of the Church. These men are intrusted with the contributions of God's people. It is their business, under the supervision of the Spiritual rulers, to make the collections which Christ hath enjoined. They are to distribute the funds according to the will of the donors[;] or when that is not expressed, according to the direction of the Session of the Church.

Such is the plan of our Standards and the Bible as I understand them; and, in every point of view, it commends itself to my cordial approbation.

I am satisfied that until we return to the simple, scriptural principle that giving is an ordinance of the Church and a necessary part of Divine worship[,] and consequently appoint men under the sanction of solemn vows to attend to this business, our contributions will neither be regular nor constant[,] and our benevolent operations must be continually exposed to distressing deficiencies of means.

I think that our churches ought to make collections on every Sunday, that the Apostolic rule ought to be observed, and in this way it will become a habit.

Periodic contributions are not much better than periodic piety.

> These hints have been hastily thrown out. If you attach any importance to them you can use them as you please. In the mean time I am
>
> Yr. Brother in the Gospel,
>
> J. H. Thornwell

These views seem so obviously valid to us today that it is with difficulty we realize that they seemed novel, revolutionary, impractical and incredible to the vast majority of the Presbyterian church at the time Thornwell set them down so succinctly. He and a few like-minded spirits would continue to press for their adoption; and finally, twelve years later, in the Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review in which we last left Charles Hodge penning his account of the 1854 General Assembly, for the first time at the General Assembly level we find some substantial proposals relating to Systematic Benevolence.

## Systematic Benevolence

> Several overtures relating to this subject were received and referred to a special committee, of which Mr. David Hadden, elder from the Presbytery of Louisiana, was Chairman. This Committee subsquently presented a report, which after some modification was adopted....[5]

The essence of the report begins with Thornwell's proposition to Foote of 1842, that among the ordinances established by Christ, in connection with the sermon, prayer and praise the worship which God's people offer to him should include "a collection raised for the poor and other purposes

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[5]Charles Hodge, "The General Assembly of 1854" Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, XXVI:3, July 1854, p 573.

of the Church."[6] It went on to recommend that the Presbyteries should encourage their churches and pastors

> to adopt some practicable method by which an opportunity shall be afforded, and an invitation given, to all the members of their congregations to contribute regularly to the objects of Christian benevolence recognized by the Assembly in the organization of the Boards of the Church, and, to such other institutions as to them may seem right.[7]

As usual in such matters, the resolutions went on to provide for the Presbyteries "at every spring meeting to institute a proper inquiry into the diligence of ministers and church sessions in executing the provisions of such method."[8]

Hodge's reaction is negligible; Stuart Robinson picks the story up and gives it the prominence an anti-Board reformer would see in it at once. Writing of the Report and Resolutions on Systematic Benevolence, Robinson says

> This action of the Assembly, we would cite as one of the instances, in which the act of Assembly is an indication of a movement of the mind of the church in a right direction.
>
> As yet, this Report of the Committee, --- and especially the first and second Resolutions, --- seems not to have excited the attention which either the subject intrinsically demands, or the bold statement of the truth, with its obvious consequences, would have led us to anticipate.[9]

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[6] The same.

[7] The same, pp 573-574.

[8] The same, p 574.

[9] [Stuart Robinson,] "The General Assembly of 1854," The Southern Presbyterian Review, VIII:1, January 1855, p 438-439. Additional paragraphing supplied.

This is another reproach aimed at Hodge, whose enthusiasm for a change in the financial arrangements of the Presbyterian church is not boistrous. By contrast, Robinson reports, some men in the Presbytery of Baltimore, which has been concerned in this matter ever since the Breckinridge days, are preparing to give wide circulation to a very remarkable paper, founded on the action of the Assembly.[10]

> The distinctive peculiarity of these Resolutions[, Robinson continues,] consists in their recalling the minds of Christian people to the fact, of late forgotten, that our book makes all needful provision for the raising and disbursing funds for objects of beneficence, as a regular and ordinary duty of God's people.[11]

Here is constitutionalism, a facet of the continuing issue raised in the 1830s by the Old School when after thirty years of work under the Plan of Union the constitutionalists felt that wherever they turned, the practice of the church and the requirements of the Form of Government were coming to have less and less connection with one another.

But the question of offerings as a part of worship goes beyond the man-made Presbyterian constitution. The Resolution reminds our people that taking up an offering as a part of worship

> is not a measure, but a doctrine, --- not simply resting upon the obligation to obey the exhortation of the General Assembly or the Board, but on the obligations to obey Christ's ordinance.
>
> [--- That it is not] one of the things which the Assembly recommends merely by resolution, but one of the matters of faith and practice over which the courts of

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[10]The same, p 439.

[11]The same.

> the church have power in the administration of authority, and the right to call delinquents to account.[12]

Far from being worth only the passing notice given them by Dr. Hodge, the Resolutions can have a far-reaching effect.

> The Resolutions of the Assembly go to the bottom of the subject. And the principles of the Resolutions, fully carried out, will, necessarily, bring about an entire change in the whole manner and spirit of the church operations.[13]

Here at last, says Robinson, is the pragmatic cure for the Agency nuisance which arose so unnecessarily.

> It is obvious therefore, that the necessity for extra machinery, agencies for the collection of funds, &c., in our church, has all grown out of a neglect of the first principles of our book; and that a return to the methods and plans of the book will do away with all such machinery.
>
> The funds will be provided, by the ordinary attendance upon the services of the house of God.[14]

In sum, the return to constitutionalism will revive the office of the Deacon and ensure a steady flow of funds into the central treasury for the support of the general operations of the church, until at last,

> the sentiment of Dr. Rice, "The church is a missionary society," will be fully realized as a great practical fact, not as heretofore, as a mere rhetorical figure.[15]

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[12]The same. Additional paragraphing supplied.

[13]The same.

[14]The same. p 440.

[15]The same.

This welcome reforming development gives Robinson an apt occasion for a compact essay which gives us a look to the past and a look to the future. The past gave us the evil leaven of voluntarism; the future "requires a more certain support than that arising from the constant operation of extra appliances."

> We think the times very propitious for the movement indicated in these Resolutions. Perhaps at no period since the division in 1837, could such a going back to the simple scheme of our book, have been successfully attempted.
>
> The leaven of voluntaryism, through the long connection of our church with that system, --- a system made necessary only by the glaring deficiencies of independency, especially in the matter of any unity of action between their churches, --- had worked too widely amongst us to allow the church to see clearly the old land-marks; and therefore, whilst adopting the scheme of church control in form, yet that was in connection with many of the practical heresies of voluntaryism.
>
> These errors have at length so effectually worked themselves out, that the most earnest advocates of the measures in which they were implied are ready to give them up.
>
> The agency system, so necessary a part of the machinery of the voluntary societies, has developed its results so fully, that for some time past the wisest and most thoughtful of those who manage the affairs of the church, have given it up, whilst those who continue the system, are obliged to use means for raising money which excite the fears and disgust of many among the most liberal of God's people.
>
> The expanded operations of the church require a more certain support, than that arising from the constant operation of extra appliances; and the habit of dissociating the contribution from the worship of the Sabbath, while at first, producing large immediate results, yet has left the piety of the church so untrained in this regard, that the difficulty of raising funds in the large amounts by subscription, is constantly

increasing, while no corresponding enlargement of the field for contributions is taking place.[16]

Once more, Robinson suggests, who can endorse what we have?

After fifteen years of working under the present arrangements, one half of the churches are reported as doing absolutely nothing.[17]

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[16]The same, pp 440-441. Additional paragraphing supplied.

[17]The same, p 441.

## THE REFORMERS' PRESSURE INCREASES

As the new year of 1855 swung round and worked upwards through her springtime towards the annual meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Stuart Robinson of Baltimore swung round in his editorial chair at the Presbyterial Critic and Monthly Review and composed an angular but plain essay entitled "More Boards in the Presbyterian Church. -- Some Inquiry Into Fundamental Principles."[1] As we read it, we can see that it seems to Robinson that the question of Boards stand "erectly in the way of every theoretical investigation, and every practical movement, connected with the welfare of the Presbyterian Church."

> It is hardly possible to attempt anything --- or to say any thing --- that is not liable to be resented as "an attack on our Boards;" hardly possible to turn in any direction, that one is not encountered with some caveat warning you off as a trespasser upon some 'float,' or some 'pre-emption,' or some 'right of way,' or some 'vested interest,' or if nothing else can be produced, some 'contingent remainder' --- in which some Board

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[1] The quotations which follow are taken from Stuart Robinson, "More Boards in the Presbyterian Church. -- Some Inquiry Into Fundamental Principles," The Presbyterial Critic and Monthly Review, I:5, May 1855, pp 197ff.

already in esse, or some Board in posse, and nearly through its incubation --- has a prior and exclusive interest --- or at the very least, an eminent domain covering the territory.[2]

The problem is that the Boards place the question of the church in "a most peculiar position."

> And there is this great matter about the whole affair --- that by means of them, the church question itself, which for our generation is a question of exceeding great importance, is placed in a most peculiar position. For to favour them, is accepted as sufficient proof of favouring every good object they have in view --- and as discharging the sum of our duty towards them, easily passes into a proof of opposition, at once to the church herself --- and to the particular objects you may be so unfortunate as to suppose you have liberty to love and promote, without an exequatur out of the chancery of some Board.[3]

They are slippery entities to pin down:

> For, if the argument so demands, the Boards are the church: if it so demand, they are merely the religious element of human society, acting voluntarily; if it so demands, they are the State, seeing they are nearly without exception, re-enforced with corporate powers, directly or indirectly, by the civil power: or if it so demands, they are a combination of all three, --- the Church, the State, and Society --- each contributing certain elemental qualities to them, and the combined result being --- practically, a very peculiar engine of power --- and theoretically, a very peculiar moral problem: a sort of lap, where Church, State, and

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[2]The same, p 197. For notice of the persistence of this problem into the 1960s and 1970s, see Kenneth J. Foreman, Jr., Continuing Problems of American Presbyterian Board and Agency Administration in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, p 404. TMS. In the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[3]The same.

community, --- all cover the same territory.[4]

And, says Robinson, there are grave doubts throughout the church as to how much Board the Presbyterian connection can stand. In The Presbyterian, for example, "A Western Man" has recently written a long letter full of reasons against erecting a fifth Board at the coming General Assembly. A Fifth Board! exclaims this correspondent, and for Church Extension, the most local of all operations since it is conceived chiefly in terms of putting up new church buildings. It is a work "that cannot be done by a central, general organization."[5] "Another Board!" 'A Western Man' exclaims, " -- and at Philadelphia!"

Robinson has nothing against the name, but he has much against the thing itself. The thing must be understood, and "constituted according to the unalterable nature, duties, interests and exigencies of the Church."[6]

Listing his requirements, Stuart Robinson comes to a key statement. As he sees it, the basic conflict of interest is between Board action -- the voluntary principle -- and Church action -- the Presbyterian principle. The first, he would "extirpate." It cannot be cured by substituting some ecclesiastical control for the former voluntary control. The important thing is "that church action shall be substituted for Board action.[7] This should be done in such a way

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[4]The same, p 198.

[5]The same, pp 198-200, Footnote.

[6]The same, p 201.

[7]The same. Italics added. This is the contrast which Robinson makes.

1. that it shall be substituted directly, in every case, where it may be conveniently, wisely, and profitably so substituted; and that it shall be substituted

2. indirectly, as a church action through Boards, instead of a Board action through and upon the Church, (if the name, Board, must be retained.)[8]

This is essential, Robinson goes on to elaborate, because as things now are, the tail is wagging the dog.

As to the present mode of organizing our Ecclesiastical Boards, and the principles upon which they are constituted, and act --- nothing can be more obvious than the following results:

1. The control of the Church, is merely nominal:

2. The control of the Board itself, is merely nominal:

3. The whole immense power, is lodged, in a form nearly irresponsible, in one, or at most two or three officers --- surrounded by three or four personal friends, and acting back upon the Church and in the Church, by the most powerful means, which are furnished, and supported by the Church herself.

4. The single officer at the head of the Board of Domestic Missions --- taking the case exactly as it stands, is only less dangerous to the Presbyterian Church, than Dr. Peters was in 1837, because he is a friend instead of an enemy; because he is orthodox and not heretical: his position, of itself, is as perilous to the Church --- or very nearly so; and it is that of which we speak, and of that particular Board, as the one least in accord with the nature of church power.

5. And yet, after so great departures from fundamental principles, and so long continued --- is the Church compensated, by the greatness of the gains she has made, above what she would have made, otherwise: or does she see the smallest probability of such a compensation, in prospect, by persisting in her present mode

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[8]The same, p 201. Paragraphing and subnumbering added.

of treating these immense practical question.[9]

Getting anything done in any area of concern about the Boards is like pulling eye teeth. "How great the difficulty was, of getting the Board of Foreign Mission located in the city of New York....How great was the difficulty of getting liberty for the General Assembly to meet out of Philadelphia; and how much greater still to go out of Pennsylvania...."[10]

And yet how dangerous it is to try; "[O]ne hardly dares whisper a suggestion of change, unless he is ready for whatever may be cast at him, or upon him...."[11]

Stuart Robinson has expostulated with Charles Hodge to the effect that he is not against Boards but simply wants to see the Boards made better.[12] As we analyze his remarks, it appears that his program of reform would appear to bear this out:

1. Get two of the Boards out of Philadelphia.

2. Put them where the work most needs them, as determined by General Assembly action.

3. Organize the Boards so that they are specifically charged with their responsibilities, and accountable for them.

4. Commit to them nothing, but the proper work belonging to each one of them, as immediate agents of

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[9]The same, pp 201-202. Paragraphing supplied.

[10]The same, p 202.

[11]The same, pp 202-203.

[12]See above, pp 401-402.

> the Church of Christ; and let all they do, be done, with, by, and through, the Church herself --- and not as powers, independent of the Church --- nor for objects heterogeneous to the Church, nor by methods foreign to the Church.
>
> 5. Break up, utterly, the one man power, where ever it may linger in any part of any Board: our Church government is not hierarchic --- it is a commonwealth.
>
> 6. Transfer the election of all the chief officers of all the Boards, to the General Assembly itself; and, as far as possible, associate ruling Elders or Deacons, in the chief executive administration --- especially the financial part of it.[13]

In conclusion, Robinson admonishes his readers, the widespread propaganda on behalf of Boards, to convince the Church that she is desperately in love with things as they are, "is all idle." None of these things will do the work. The work needs men and means; and these are "a question, simply, of piety and ability, on the part of the Church."

> And whenever you put the means of reaching that piety and ability, on a satisfactory footing --- there will be no need either of Reviews, editorials, Reports, or harangues, to convince any body, that they are on a satisfactory footing.
>
> The result itself, will convince everybody.[14]

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[13]The same, p 203. Paragraphing supplied.

[14]The same, pp 203-204. Paragraphing supplied.

## STUART ROBINSON ANALYSES THE SITUATION

Arriving in Nashville, a town set on the banks of the winding Cumberland River as she makes her way through the plateau she has dissected into a jumble of mountains whose flat tops alone remain to testify to the concept of plateau, we find a General Assembly whose construction is not yet laid out on lines we take for granted today.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures, always a good place for political leverage amongst Presbyterians, has 23 members; yet 15 out of the Assembly's 29 Synods, and their constituent Presbyteries, have no representation on it. The Committee on Theological Seminaries, holding the key to the future character of the leadership of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, has only 5 members, and they are drawn from just two adjoining Synods, three ministers from one of those Synods and two elders from the other.[1]

Casting back through our memories of earlier General

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[1] [Stuart Robinson,] "The General Assembly of 1855," Presbyterial Critic and Monthly Review, VI:8, August 1855, pp 341-342. Robinson, constantly pressing for reform, calls for a rule of the Assembly "to appoint large standing committees, on which every portion of the church should be fairly represented."

Assemblies, we realize that the growing number of commissioners and the larger and larger sanctuaries in which the Assembly has been meeting are losing for our church the intimate and informal forum in which the issues before her highest court are discussed. Where for years every man spoke easily from his place, heard with little difficulty by all, now men are beginning to come forward and go up on the platform to speak, and before this Nashville Assembly is over this will seem to be the confirmed habit of the body.[2] This in turn leads debate to degenerate from intimate give-and-take in discussion to something more like set harangues.

> At first, a few old men were allowed the privilege; then little by little others assumed it; until at length it not only threatens to become universal, --- but certain members prepare, beforehand, moveable con-

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> He calls further -- once more a call for what we in our day take for granted and cannot imagine the resentment and opposition which Robinson encountered for his pains -- for an assignment of business to such committees so that "as far as possible, every member of the Assembly should be given due labor and due honor: no man or section specially burdened or specially distinguished -- none wholly passed by."
>
> Another revolutionary reforming fancy of Robinson's as he surveys our 1855 General Assembly is that "by devoting a few afternoons in the early part of the sessions of the body to committee work exclusively[,] every member of the body would necessarily become well and early acquainted with certain parts of its important business."
>
> To these novel suggestions Robinson adds this, that the Assembly adhere "to some simple order of business." (p 342)

[2] [Stuart Robinson,] "The General Assembly of 1855," Presbyterial Critic and Monthly Review, VI:8, August 1855, p 342.

veniencies which can be carried up to the platform with them for effective oratory.[3]

Not the first to sense beneath the shifting tides of oratory the need for some pattern of party or affinity to explain the surface ebb and flow of debate as the issues unfold during the deliberations, we catch the eye of Stuart Robinson of Baltimore. We know that he enjoys spreading abroad his analytical insight and conclusions, drawn from the material he gathers from many quarters. "What," we ask him, "are the underlying lines of basic division in our church, which show up practically in these annual sessions of our General Assembly?" Stuart Robinson has been thinking about this. He is delighted to expound on it for the benefit of all who will gather round and listen.

> There remain in the bosom of the Presbyterian Church[, Robinson explains,] three types of opinion upon such of these things as there is any difference amongst us concerning. They occasionally appear with some distinctness; though we cannot avoid the belief that they are all drawing more nearly towards each other --- and the points on which they are clearly distinguished are gradually diminishing, as the Church advances on her high career, in the line of the immense force imparted to her in 1830-'40.
>
> All three of these types [are appearing] very obviously in the Assembly of 1855; and the most of what [we see going on here at this Assembly] might perhaps be traced to this three-fold division of the body --- and the various fluctuations of concert and antagonism of these three-fold elements.[4]

Encouraged to continue, Robinson proceeds to describe

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[3]The same.

[4]Robinson's perceptive analysis of the basic alignments in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in the mid-1850s, beginning here and continuing below, pp 460-463, is taken directly from Stuart Robinson's

the present position and historical background of each of the three types in turn.

> [First, he says, t]here is that type of thorough Presbyterianism which rallied the earliest and most resolutely for the deliverance of the Church, and which came in the progress of the conflict to be called derisively, the "Act and Testimony party:" the party against which Princeton set itself with such desperate hostility twenty years ago. and which after an interval of some years of more forbearing counsels, it appears inclined to distinguish again with peculiar opposition, under the name of "High Church Presbyterianism."
>
> Of this type Dr. Thornwell and we might perhaps add Dr. Krebbs, and many other distinguished members of the Assembly of 1855, might be taken as specimens more or less complete.
>
> [Second, n]ext to this [is] that type of a Presbyterianism, which was not ready in 1831: was not ready in 1834: was <u>getting</u> <u>ready</u> in 1836: and being fully resolved in 1837, participated in all the struggles and triumphs of that eventful year --- and in all that followed.
>
> Without the adhesion of this party, the Church could not have been sound as early as 1837. In those days it delighted to call itself the "Virginia School," and to avouch, (we always thought with doubtful propriety,) the late Dr. Alexander as its head.
>
> Dr. Plumer, to whom we might add other leading members of the Assembly, (whose views of the true policy of the Church we consider far sounder than those of Dr.

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concluding observations on the 1855 General Assembly, as printed in the <u>Presbyterial Critic and Monthly Review</u>, VI:10, October 1855, pp 446-447. Tenses recast in brackets. Additional paragraphing supplied.

Robinson identifies with the first group he describes, but says that he has "no difficulty in accepting, with sincere cordiality," the other two groups "as honored Presbyterian brethren, with whom we cordially agree in most essential things." (p 447)

Plumer,) might be taken as exponents of this type.[5]

Sectionalism, we remember, has been suggested as one of the dividing lines between Old and New School Presbyterians, but we have concluded earlier that both schools included strong elements from both North and South. Having observed with interest the fact that up until the recent beginnings of Princeton involvement, all of the debate about Boards has been primarily among Presbyterians located in the South, we are jogged by Stuart Robinson's first two heads into noticing that the great leader of the "Act and Testimony Party" was the southerner Robert J. Breckinridge, backed in many cases by southern and border men such as Joshua L. Wilson of Cincinnati, and that the "Virginia School" which Robinson credits with having been essential to the reform of 1837 is by definition southern. We take a close look at our Baltimore commissioner and wonder how he will define his third type of 1855 Presbyterianism. Robinson's dicta are usually interesting and often blunt.

He does not disappoint us. His third type is Northern.

> [Third, he continues,] after both of the others, [is] that type of Presbyterianism --- which was able to tolerate the Acts of the Assembly of 1837 and '38, preferred the Old School, and stood for the Church on the basis of the acts of 1837 and '38, and which has contended so sharply ever since, for all that was left in the Church at that era, and against any particle of further progress in the way of reform.
>
> Dr. Boardman must be considered the leading exponent of this party in the Assembly of 1855. In old times, it delighted to be called the "Princeton Party," and still, we believe, glories in that name.
>
> The Church was saved without the co-opertion of

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[5]See Note 4 above, p 460.

> this party; nay, even against its strenuous opposition to most of the leading measures adopted to save it.
>
> But, after it was saved, this party seems to have supposed that it was extremely clear, that the Church being saved in a manner very distasteful to it, could not get along without its supervision, and ought not to be take any new step which it did not approve: in short, that the Church having acted without its consent on that great occasion, ought to be satisfied with this act of disrespect, and forbear to incur any danger of the sort again.[6]

Stuart Robinson thinks, as we talk with him further, that between 1838 and 1855 all these three types of Old School Presbyterian have "been gradually wearing into ...one great type...." With some optimism he identifies this emerging common Presbyterianism as that of his own group, the reforming "Act and Testimony Party" which the Princeton Party insist on calling "High Church Presbyterian." The name is not Robinson's choice, but he thinks that this position, under whatever name, is the one the church as a whole is moving towards.[7]

Walking away in the cool of an after-thundershower Nashville summer evening and going over Stuart Robinson's analysis in our minds, what should we make of it?

We can see that he stands squarely in the Breckinridge/Baltimore tradition. For Stuart Robinson the Act and Testimony men are reformers, and their work in 1837 delivered the church from a Babylonian captivity.

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[6] See Note 4 above, p 460.

[7] [Stuart Robinson,] "The General Assembly of 1855," Presbyterial Critic and Monthly Review, VI:10, October 1855, p 447.

We can see that he agrees with those analysts, then and since, who have seen the adhesion of the South to the movement for Old School reform of the church in 1837 as essential to the success of the reforming assembly. Under the tag-title of Virginia School Robinson encompasses those in the south who identified themselves as of a Virginia School of thought and leadership, and who first swung in line with the more daring Act and Testimony party.

We can see that he has a strong antipathy for the group calling themselves the Princeton Party. In Robinson's view this group attacked the Act and Testimony, wavered in subsequent months, gave no strong support to the reform party and the actions of the reforming assembly of 1837 in time to help carry the day, but did finally support the 1837 decisions, through very late and (in his view) reluctantly. The findings of a present-day scholar such as Trinterud, who represents the Princeton faculty as having been dragooned into the reform by salary stoppages and by threats of the establishment of a strong nearby Old School Seminary with General Assembly backing, might or might not have brought Robinson news;[8] but clearly would not have astonished him.

All this is obvious. Less obvious, but even more interesting, we find that Robinson has an explanation for Princeton's present reluctance to see any change, however small or however much needed (in the judgment of others) in the Board system.

The Princeton Party, we may say in our own terms, in

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[8]Trinterud, Leonard J., "Charles Hodge (1797-1878) [:] Theology -- Didactic and Polemical," in Kerr, Hugh T., Editor, Sons of the Prophets [:] Leaders in Protestantism from Princeton Seminary, pp 33-34.

Robinson's analysis belongs to the Eisenhower/TVA school. Scholars of a later era than Robinson's remember that President, formerly General, Eisenhower, was quoted by his detractors as having said of the TVA, "Wonderful! Magnificent! Let's make sure we never have another one." Whatever was reformed in 1837-1838 the Princeton Party will accept, even support, but reformation for them is a one-shot affair. The concept of continuing such a reform to its logical and much needed conclusions is alien to the Princeton Party.

It is at precisely this point that the friction arises between the Princeton Party and those in the Breckinridge tradition who read Semper Reformandum as meaning neither its Twentieth Century meaning of ever innovating, ever shifting, ever becoming Some New Thing; nor, as in Robinson's Princeton, not reading Semper Reformandum at all; but rather in its original meaning of ever returning to the Christianity of Scripture: of re-forming the church and the Christian life once more to the New Testament pattern.

## THREE EX-MODERATORS PROVE STUART ROBINSON RIGHT

Benjamin Palmer's remark, that in Presbyterian assemblies an abstract question tends to come up in some concrete form, is well borne out by the Nashville Assembly of 1855. Three formidable ex-Moderators address themselves there at length to the matter of Boards; but the vehicle for their more general views is a motion to recommit the Standing Committee's recommendation for the erection of an Executive Committee on Church Extension, to be located in St. Louis, with instructions to bring back a recommendation for its creation as a fifth Board.

It has been fifteen years since Breckinridge first raised this issue of Presbyterian Boards. Now for the first time the question receives protracted major attention from major leaders at the General Assembly. Three outstanding, recognized leaders are present as commissioners, and each in the debate sets forth his views at length: Henry Augustus Boardman, who was Moderator only last year; James Henley Thornwell, who was Moderator in 1847; and William Swan Plumer, Moderator of the crucial reforming Assembly of 1838.

Dr. Plumer very nearly carries the day with his strong support of the motion before the house, which is in essence to create a fifth Board. To lose by a vote of 102 to 106 is

to come close indeed.[1] Dr. Plumer speaks against the views of those like the venerable and respected pioneer Dr. Blythe, who

> was opposed to this building of churches for others. He aproved the plan of building for themselves, according to their ability, and improving the building as they grew and prospered. He repeated, that while he said not a word against church erection itself, he was opposed to both a Board and a Committee of the Assembly. He would abide by our old plan.[2]

In this, with our advantage of hindsight we know that Plumer, the man who alone would twice be Presbyterian General Assembly Moderator, is foreshadowing what will become a fixed pattern in the Presbyterian church, that of rejecting the principles of Blythe and Nevius who have found that a church is strongest and her people most staunch when their buildings arise out of their own need and effort rather than being built by outside money and preceeding the formation and growth of the congregation.

Plumer has evidently read up on the literature of the debate. He says that it has been both said and published that "by the decision of this question will be determined whether the Church is in favour of, or opposed to[,] Boards."[3] He is content to join the larger issue on the present form of the question.

But the opponents of Boards have not impressed him.

> One had called all the Boards fungi. He would look at the meaning. The word includes, according to

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[1] Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review 27:3 July 1855 p 511.

[2] The same, p 522.

[3] The same, p 513.

> Webster's Dictionary, 'toadstools,' 'mushrooms,' &c. Are our Boards toadstools? If they are, they are the prettiest toadstools I ever saw.[4]

And in addition to the good fruit they have borne, Boards, by their rotating classes, guard against hasty Assembly upsets of their work; diffuse power better than does the more concentrated Committee;[5] are no more a delegation of power than Paul's delegation of power to ordain in every city; and are far more qualified to judge matters of staff than the Assembly is.[6]

Worse; to abolish Boards would be a positive breach of faith.

> [C]onsider also that the public faith of the Church has been pledged for the perpetuity of these Boards. How so? They have been told to become incorporated; and dying men and women have bequeathed money to those Boards in trust. Shall we break our faith?[7]

As for the divine right of Presbyterianism, Dr. Plumer finds elders and deacons in Scripture, but no trace of either Committee or Board;[8]

> and if brethren insist on the jus divinum he did not know where they would get their authority, unless from that text, "The thing that thou hast received, that

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[4]The same.

[5]The same.

[6]The same, p 514.

[7]The same.

[8]The same, p 516.

commit thou to faithful men." [9]

In a close vote there is always the agonizing question afterwards, What did we do wrong? What lost us those three men whose shift it would have taken to put us over? In very close votes the answer may be, Any one of a number things, but at this Assembly Dr. Plumer makes one serious misstatement of fact which sends observer Robinson straight through the ceiling and is bound to have been noticed by others whose memory went back the bare 19 years to 1837 and 1838.

> The ground that the Assembly has no right to appoint Boards, [Dr. Plumer says,] is precisely the same taken by the New-school men in the Assembly of 1836, at Pittsburgh. If the Assembly is not to sit all the year round, it must appoint some party to do its work.[10]

Stuart Robinson is fit to be tied. At the first recess he is filling our ear with what he can already visualize in print. This gaffe of Dr. Plumer's concerns "the most important facts in the recent history of our Church --- facts of which he ought...to have personal knowledge....

> [I]t does seem to us, that an eminent divine who is a professional teacher of Theology, in an important school of the Church, ought to respect the fundamental distinctions of logic sufficiently to observe, that it is not precisely the same thing to say that the Assembly has no power, as it is to say that the Assembly alone has power.[11]

Dr. Thornwell, passing by, could not agree more thoroughly. "The principle on which we cast off voluntary soci-

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[9] The same, p 515.

[10] The same, p 517.

[11] Presbyterial Critic VI:9 September 1855, p 398.

eties[," he says, as he has always said, and will say again on the floor of the Assembly tomorrow,]

> was not that the Church had a right to appoint Boards, but that the Church, in her organic capacity, had a right to conduct the cause of missions. It was for this principle we cast off all voluntary societies. The Board question was not under debate. It was a question which lay back of this. It was, then, unfair to misrepresent the position of those who opposed Boards, as if they had assailed the principle which gave us our present standing as a Church.[12]

So many commissioners to the Assembly want to get in on the debate that it is clear we have a subject that is no longer the interest of but a select few. Benjamin Mosby Smith rises to say that the motion before us is as good as any to use to get at the main issues. If the move to erect a Board instead of a Committee is substantive, moving power away from the immediate control of the Assembly, he must oppose it.[13] Dr. Van Renssalaer wants no new Board and no new Committee; the Board presently handling Church erection aid simply needs some new energy. Worst of all would be for opposition and antagonism to this proposed Fifth Board excite an opposition to all our existing Boards.[14]

For some, like Samuel R. Wilson of Cincinnati Presbytery, it is already too late. They are already opposed to all Boards in general; Boards "were adopted," he says, "by good men who were not yet fully freed from the Egyptian bondage of Congregationalism."[15] This whole question

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[12] Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review 27:3 July 1855, p 533.

[13] The same, pp 517-518.

[14] The same, pp 521-522.

[15] The same, p 522.

illustrates for Mr. Wilson the folly of forming some central organ to do what can only be done best, if really at all, by an entirely different approach, knit to the daily Christian life of the people. I come from a city of 200,000, he says, and they have "churches which some might object to on account of their costliness." But these churches have

> grown up from feeble beginnings; first a log house, then a larger frame house, then a brick building, and so on, until the present point was attained. The pioneer missionaries there had no idea of building first, and getting the people afterwards.[16]

"If we cannot succeed by our missionaries preaching the gospel, Mr. Wilson concludes, "we cannot succeed with a Board or Committee located anywhere."[17]

By the time commissioners Robertson of Winnebago, McKee of South Alabama, Ewing of Peoria, Candee of Milwaukie, Steele of Chillicothe, Krebs of New York, and Smith of Sangamon have had their say on the subject, there is no doubt left that the debate on the administration of Presbyterian missions has reached the General Assembly level in force.

Two big guns are yet to be fired.

James Henley Thornwell, in an address Hodge in the Princeton Review will praise as extremely able, sets forth his position in terms familiar to those who have followed his published material on the subject. He is for doing something about building new churches; but shall it be done by a Board?

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[16]The same, pp 522-523.

[17]The same, p 523.

He agrees that the question before the house affords an opportunity to get at the basic issue. And he is opposed to Boards, whether one Board or a fifth Board.

> It involves the whole question, as to the degree in which the Church possesses discretionary power.
>
> Some maintain that the Church has attained her maturity; that God has proposed only certain ends and left the means of attaining them to her own wisdom. She is simply a confidential agent of her Master. He says to her, You are no longer under Jewish bondage. You are in your maturity; use your light, and your decisions, as to the means, will be approved.
>
> [But I do not believe at all] in this wide discretionary power. The Church's duty is simply to do her Master's will, and that will is plainly laid down as to all particulars. The Church has no such discretionary power.[18]

Second, Dr. Thornwell says, in addition to being wrong in theory, one Board or a fifth Board is wrong in its practical effect.

> The Boards form a separating wall between the Church and her benevolent operations.
>
> Our system is one which supposes an interest in the Church's work to be felt in her every part. Everything that obstructs this flow of sympathy is to be discarded. How much more would every portion of the Church, every Synod, and every Presbytery, feel a hearty sympathy in these works of benevolence, if all were committed immediately to the Assembly? That is the heart and centre of the system, and the zeal here kindled passes out to the extremities of the whole body, and makes the whole body one in sympathy, and energy, and aim. Set aside[,] then, this intermediate barrier.[19]

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[18] The same, p 525.

[19] The same.

Thornwell introduces two new considerations which we have not met in the debate in earlier years. He mentions the first in connection with his effort to bring out in a new way the force of the argument that Boards are intrinsically extranaeous to the Presbyterian system.

Consider the appointment of a theological professor, or the appointment of a pastor to a field, he suggests. These are serious matters with far-reaching effects, and neither the General Assembly nor the Presbytery would think of committing the responsibility in those cases to others.

Such a matter "is never left to a Board." And yet the matters presently committed to Boards "are far more serious interests" than the appointment of professors and the settling of pastors.[20]

The second new consideration which Thornwell advances is the effect of centralization of power, "as much to be dreaded in Church as in State.

> How wrong then to centralize it in the noblest work which the Church fulfils! Make the Committee as large as you please, and the power still concentrates towards a small centre. Is this consistent with our belief as to the parity of the ministry? The whole plan is unnatural; and had not these Boards been in time past the points around which Christian energy at first was rallied, our system would have thrown them off before.[21]

Thornwell's remedy -- his concrete proposal on the

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[20] The same, p 526.

[21] The same, pp 525-526. This is the only place in Thornwell's recorded views on mission administration in which the writer has been able to discover a parallel to the increasingly popular decentralist political

floor of the General Assembly of 1855 - sheds light on his willingness to accept palliative remedies when the patient is clearly far from being ready to accept the needed surgery. It also gives us an insight into his priorities -- his evaluation of a fifth new structure under whatever name, as compared with the problem of the concentration of existing

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theories which contributed to the eventual secession of many of the southern states.

Does this parallel indicate that the eccesiastical theory was a product of the political theories of the environment?

The answer is probably No.

First, Breckinridge and Thornwell came to conviction on their general position on Boards by 1839 and 1840. At this date, decentralization and threatened secession were not yet relocated to and primarily identified with the south. A causal connection might actually run in the other direction: that having early reached decentralist positions in ecclesiastical theory, Thornwell was therefore more open to decentralist theories in secular politics as they developed.

Second, through this period of the debate Thornwell was committed to the nation and its national government. His public opposition to the Nullification agitation is well known and typical of his political position which (as he took the floor of the 1855 General Assembly to say in answer to Boardman's effort to link him to Calhoun of South Carolina, and thus to sectional southern politics) was consistently and continuously opposed to those of John C. Calhoun. So far as Thornwell's ecclesiastical theory was decentralist, it was decentralist incidentally to the rest of his church theory and not by attraction to a regional political theory he publicly opposed for years.

Third, Thornwell did not go nearly so far as John Calkins Coit in theories of church decentralization. Thornwell wanted <u>each</u> court of the church, the General Assembly included, to do its own work organically and directly. This is a major reason for his willingness to accept the substitution of an Executive Committee

Boards in Philadelphia. He offered a group of motions which in a firm but orderly way would move the Board of Domestic Missions from Philadelphia to the west.

They failed of passage.[22]

Henry Augustus Boardman, the third big gun in the first major General Assembly debate on the administration of Presbyterian missions, did not hesitate to join issue with Thornwell as squarely as Thomas Smyth had done, on the question of the church's freedom to devise new measures. "No man can show that the church has power to carry on her work," he replies, "without assuming that the Church has certain powers to do her work which are not distinctly enunciated in the New Testament.

> We yet breathe the free, generous evangelical spirit of the New Testament. The whole theory of these gentlemen is at variance with what I regard the spirit of the gospel on this subject -- a spirit which allows the work of Christ to be done as the hearts of Christ's

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for a Board. A Committee was more directly amenable to or an extension of any court setting it up, than a quasi-autonomous Board was. Thornwell valued the central contribution of the General Assembly and opposed no central organ so long as it was organic to the Assembly and not extraneous to it.

Fourth, the Old School Presbyterian reformers were committed to the action of the <u>whole church</u> in mission. They opposed the system which asked for commitment to remote action by a contrived agency which could never do what only the whole church in all its constituent parts, all the way down to its individual members, could do. This commitment led to the decentralist features of their program. To seek the root of their limited decentralism elsewhere is to miss its true significance.

[22]The same, p 511.

people in their various circumstances may dictate.[23]

Dr. Boardman's style is forceful; if we did not know him for the powerful city pastor that he is, his steamroller approach to the disposal of his opponents would quickly remind us of others in his position whom we have known. "A new theory of the Church" has been propounded,[24] and he had listened to Dr. Thornwell's speech "as to the beautiful and ingenious speculations of the great statesman of South Carolina." Thornwell gave "mere opinions." His speech, like "a chain, polished and bright, but not fastened at either end[,]" had no connection with "the word of God on the one hand, nor to the Church on the other." Those who rallied the Church around Presbyterian Boards in 1837-1838 were guilty of shameful political trickery if it now appears that the Boards all along were false and unscriptural.[25]

Dr. Boardman makes two additional principal points. If Boards are forbidden, there is no practical way to do the work. Thornwell would evidently have to send the Assembly herself perambulating through the land. And if Scriptural warrant be required by Thornwell for Boards, Dr. Boardman will require Scriptural warrant for everything else in the church. He begins with Committees:

> If you say, show us your authority for a Board, I say, show us your authority for a Committee. There is

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[23]The same, p 529.

[24]The same, p 527.

[25]The same. This last charge brings Stuart Robinson to the flash-point. In the Presbyterial Critic for September (VI:9 pp 398ff) he will give Dr. Boardman back the language he longs to take onto the floor and deliver in person but cannot, not being a commissioner.

the Bible; give us the law and the testimony.[26]

But Dr. Boardman, once past theory, agrees that the "very best friends of Boards, too, are decidedly opposed to the formation of a fifth Board at this time."[27] So he favors a transfer of the existing Committee of Church Extension, which is a subsidiary of the existing Board of [Domestic] Missions, to St. Louis, and offers a resolution to instruct the Board accordingly.

Dr. Boardman's motion also fails. The Assembly lays it on the table, 113 to 83.[28]

Three ex-Moderators having proved Stuart Robinson right in his analysis of the leading schools of opinion current, but each having failed to obtain an Assembly majority for his preferred solution, it remains for the Reverend Mr. James Pelan of Marion Presbytery in the Synod of Ohio to move that a Committee of Church Erection [instead of Church Extension] be elected in classes, with power to collect, appropriate and disburse funds, and to appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer.

The Nashville General Assembly of 1855 approved Mr. Pelan's motion by a tally of 134 to 57,[29] and in a separate action fixed the membership of the Committee at 24, equally divided between ministers and elders -- small for a Board,

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[26]The same, p 528.

[27]The same, p 531.

[28]The same, p 511.

[29]The same.

large for a Committee.[30]

Such the debate on the floor of the Assembly.[31] In the after-debate in the pages of the journals conducted in Princeton and Baltimore, Hodge would repeat the arguments for the Boards and claim resounding victory for Dr. Boardman, and for Boards, while Robinson would repeat the arguments against the Boards and fry Hodge for wishful thinking.

But, quoting verbatim and in full Breckinridge's 6th paragraph in his opening attack of 1839, Robinson compares what Breckinridge outlines and what the General Assembly of 1855 did. He finds that by and large after all these years the church is coming round to Breckinridge's prescription -- "Let a committee of moderate size be appointed on each important subject; let it really be a committee, and really be responsible; let it be a separate committee for each interest; and let them, if necessary, be distributed [geographically through the Assembly?] Then the church will really do its work; and the work will really be done on ecclesiastical principles."[32]

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[30] In Robinson's hearing of Boardman, the Philadelphia pastor had been more personal and more cutting by far than the newspaper transscripts of his speeches dared to quote.

[31] The Southern Presbyterian Review, X:2 1858, p 302.

[32] Presbyterial Critic, VI:9 September 1855, p 399.

## FOUR YEARS OF UNCERTAINTY

When the Board of Foreign Missions Assistant Secretary John Leighton Wilson faced the Old School Presbyterian General Assembly of 1856 in its first meeting ever held in the City of New-York, he was understandably nervous after the fireworks of the preceding year.

"These are times," he began, "of scrutiny and agitation in reference to our Boards...."[1] But his worries were for nothing. The Foreign Missions Board annual report breezed though with applause; Dr. James Henley Thornwell at the Board's request preached the most impressive sermon ever heard for Foreign Missions in Manhattan's history, till the Assembly wept; and during the debates he expressed his uneasiness about Presbyterian Boards in only the briefest of conscience-clearing remarks in connection with the report of the Board of Christian Education [of Young Men for the Gospel Ministry].

This Board had at one point indicated that it was extending its influence over educational institutions in-

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[1] Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, 28:3 July 1865, p 564.

stead of confining itself to aiding candidates for the ministry, and at another point had indicated that education properly belongs exclusively to the Church, instead of to the parent, to the Church, and to the State.

"This is no place to discuss the subject," Thornwell explained, "but as the Scotch Presbyterians say in their Presbyteries, I have exonerated my conscience and will stop."[2] Others, it is true, found a few more things to say in connection with the report of this normally undramatic Board of Education. One of these, at that time neither venerable nor looked back to as a by-word, remarked

> The truth is that our theology, instead of being the strong meat formerly required, is evaporating into diluted potions administered all over the land in small muslin covered volumes, that require no thought or labor to fathom.[3]

We do not know what effect this speaker had on his immediate audience, except that they did not weep, but apparently he took his own words to heart. After military adventures and other disappointments, in later years he remembered this complaint and devoted himself to doing what he could to cure it. His name was Dabney.

1857 is a more curious story. It will be remembered that the New School and Old School accounts of the opening

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[2]The Same, pp 569-570; verbs recast to direct quotation. For light on the later development of this Board's successors in this context, see Kenneth J. Foreman, Jr., Continuing Problems of American Presbyterian Board and Agency Administration in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, pp 506-507. TMS. In the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[3]The same, p 569; verb form restored.

scenes of the General Assembly of 1838 move off in different directions, as though one reality blurred, shimmered into two images, each of which went its separate way; and that as we looked over the separate reports of Charles Hodge and Stuart Robinson, of the 1855 General Assembly in Nashville which we travelled so pleasantly to witness, one man saw all the arguments against the Boards answered so masterfully that

> it is unnecessary to dwell longer on the subject[, and i]t may be assumed, that this whole matter is set at rest.
>
> The ablest men in the Church, [Dr. Hodge continues,] who have ever expressed their disapprobation of Boards, have done their best in argument, and have utterly failed; failed, not for the want of strength, but from the inherent weakness of their cause. Even a giant's arm is unable to give momentum to a feather. Nay, the more vigorous the throw, the less in such a case is the effect.[4]

-- while another man saw that on the contrary, the arguments were taking effect, despite all the defenses thrown up against them:

> Really [Robinson writes,] it would seem as if the Assembly of 1855, had taken from the forgoing article [by Breckinridge] written nearly sixteen years before --- the programme of the leading features of its plan for the new organization: a standing committee --- appointed by the Assembly --- located apart from other operations --- charged with the particular work --- directly responsible to the Assembly ---and of moderate size! Here is the new theory of the church --- so shocking to Dr. Boardman, voted in all its parts, by the Assembly under his eyes![5]

The General Assembly of 1857, met in Lexington, Ken-

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[4]The same, 27:3 July 1855, p 538. Paragraphing added.

[5]Presbyterial Critic VI:9 September 1855, p 400.

tucky, presents a similar problem. To read Charles Hodge's account of it in the Princeton Review, the Board of [Domestic] Missions expressed a lack of confidence in the shift to Systematic Benevolence enacted by the 1854 and 1855 Assemblies, and "Dr. Breckinridge, Dr. Adger, and Mr. C. D. Drake objected to that portion of the Committee's report which seemed to imply a censure on those churches which had not contributed to the funds of the Board."[6]

The outcome of these objections to an implication, Hodge tells us, was that

> The report[,] having been slightly modified to obviate the objections above referred to, was unanimously adopted....[7]

As for the debate on Boards in the balance of the General Assembly of 1857, in the Princeton Review we read simply of proposals by Dr. Adger for strengthening interest in Foreign Missions among the churches,[8] and of Dr. Thornwell's rejoicing that

> the time has past when the cause of Foreign Missions is regarded as a mere romantic enterprise. We are looking upon it as a part of the organized life of the Church .... [W]e should consider it just as inconsistent now for a man to feel no interest in Foreign Missions as for him to neglect to pray. It comes as a part of the worship of God. ...
>
> Is it not a great revival when we are no longer to look upon Foreign Missions as something outside of the Church, but something intrinsic and of herself?[9]

All very pleasant, and all routine and peaceable, we

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[6] Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, 29:3 July 1857, p p 451.

[7] The same.

[8] The same.

[9] The same, p 459. Paragraphing added.

see. Boardman slew Thornwell in Nashville, and the debate was then and there thus once again and finally "set at rest."[10] Hodge's confidence expressed in 1855, that "the courtesy and candour...of Dr. Thornwell, make it evident that there is no element at work in our Church which is likely to disturb its peace or impede its progress...",[11] is eminently justified.

But when another year has rolled by, there arrives in the mails our copy of the Southern Presbyterian Review for the Spring of 1858, and in it is a steaming article by John Bailey Adger on this same Old School Presbyterian General Assembly held in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1857.[12]

From Adger we learn that what the text of the report of the Board of [Domestic] Missions actually said was considerable more than an "implication." It read, that although a

> much larger number of churches than [1,643] will no doubt report to the Assembly, contributions made by them to the cause of Domestic Missions, yet, inasmuch as none of their contributions came into the Board's treasury, and the Board, as such, derived no pecuniary assistance from them, therefore
>
> -- these churches are delinquent churches, and
>
> -- the responsibility of their ministers is a fearful one, and also that
>
> -- church sessions who prevent pastors from taking

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[10] Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, 27:3 July 1855, p 538.

[11] The same, p 540.

[12] Pp 276 ff.

> up collections for the Board, ought to be brought to the Presbyteries,
>
> -- that they may discipline the elders who thus presumptuously and wickedly rebel, &c.[13]

Implication?! The official position of the Board is forthright, that if a church does not contribute to Domestic Missions through the Board, it is delinquent; its pastor has a fearful responsibility; and if it be the Elders of the church who are responsible, they have earned discipline from Presbytery as presumptuous and wicked rebels.

From Adger we learn further that the Standing Committee of the General Assembly in reporting to the house on this Board's report, offered a resolution that any church, which does not "contribute regularly to the Boards, should be considered to have forfeited its good standing."[14]

Small wonder, says Adger, that some stiff protest was offered on the floor "in defense of the church from these objurgations from her own servants?"[15] Robert Jefferson Breckinridge took issue with the strong phrase "good standing," and with the notion of blind blanket condemnation of those who were doing much for domestic missions through congregational and presbyterial direct channels.[16] Adger himself supplied chapter and verse. Harmony Presbytery in South Carolina (under John Calkins Coit's reforming impetus) was supporting two Domestic Missionaries within its own

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[13] The Southern Presbyterian Review, X:2 1858, p 289. Paragraphing added.

[14] The same, p 290.

[15] The same, p 290.

[16] The same.

bounds and sending additional funds to the General Assembly Board.

> They do not go through the vain ceremony of sending funds to Philadelphia just to be sent back to them again; nor of applying to the Board to commission a man whom they know well, and the Board does not know, to labor in a field with which they are familiar, and the Board entire strangers to it.[17]

Harmony, Adger added, looks on its Presbyterial bounds, just as Pastors and Sessions look on their Parochial bounds, as laid on them as a special responsibility to cultivate "without the needless intervention of a Board away off at Philadelphia."[18] And the Report of the Board censures not simply such truly dead and uninterested churches as there may be, but also many of the best Presbyterian churches in the land, who are earnest in Domestic Missions, directly involved in ways the Board knows nothing of. Adger cites the $7,000 mission church for Negroes built by a Presbyterian congregation, and the ministry to Negroes pioneered earlier by Charles Colcock Jones -- supported at no pinch-penny level, supported by generous men. "Are we to censure such doings because not done indirectly through the Board?"[19]

Here, Adger had insisted on the floor of the Lexington Assembly, is a perfect illustration of how the absentee and artificial Boards choke off the true involvement of the widespread church. It stands out clearly, he had said, when

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[17]The same.

[18]The same, pp 290-291.

[19]The same, p 290.

Harmony Presbytery is compared and contrasted with its neighboring South Carolina Presbytery -- a Presbytery

> which had become "auxiliary to the Board" --- a strange expression indeed! The church becoming auxiliary to its own officers!
>
> The consequence is, as it is likely always to be from such arrangements, that the Presbytery leans on the Board, and depends on them to do the work. There is a Board in Philadelphia whose duty it is to carry on Domestic Missions, and so Presbytery being always hurried with other business, this great interest is overlooked.
>
> In this way our Machinery is seen to be cumbrous, and the whole arrangement of a Board at Philadelphia, to supervise the work of Domestic Missions in an established Presbytery, is evidently an illogical, an unnatural, and a monstrous thing.[20]

The protests were heeded. The Assembly re-committed the Standing Committee's report, and the language about "good standing" was taken out. The official report of the Board itself stood, of course. What the Board had written, it had written.

Adger's analysis of the overall situation with the program for reformation of mission administration is more pessimistic than Stuart Robinson's. Not himself given by temperament to pessimism,[21] his character less belligerent than Robinson's and less dogmatic, more winsome than Hodge's, his assessment of the state of affairs in probably more reliable than the other contemporary surveys available to us. In any case he comes out between Robinson who sees the

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[20]The same, p 291. Paragraphing added.

[21]See below, p 488.

church weathering around to the Reformer's position, and Hodge who steadfastly dismisses the whole movement as discredited and finished.

What Adger sees is a minority of reformers, forced into opposition by Board aggression. At Buffalo in 1854 and at Nashville in 1855 what was urged was an increase in the number of Boards; and the result was a Committee in name and a Board in practical fact. In New York in 1856 there was a respite; then at Lexington in 1857 the recommendation was for positive censure in severe terms upon all "who would not employ the one big wheel." Plumer had said in Nashville that his soul loathed the "constant irritation of our public officers" and the "constant, underhand, stealthy stabbing of them;" Adger sees rather nothing else but just giving the minority the choice of either yielding up its cherished principles or else deciding, "fairly and earnestly to oppose the measures" advanced by the Boards.[22]

But at Lexington the offensive language of the Standing Committee had been overturned, to the embarrassment of the Board of Domestic Missions. Adger feels strongly that the Boards would not be so overbearing if they were not encouraged by "a certain very high authority,"[23] Charles Hodge of Princeton. Hodge in reviewing the Buffalo Assembly called the whole discussion "unworthy of debate." It was the "jus divinum theory in its dotage." It was nothing but hair-splitting. Reviewing the Nashville Assembly the next year, Hodge surveyed the first full-scale debate of the matter at

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[22] The Southern Presbyterian Review, X:2 1858, p 292.

[23] Adger follows the courtesies of the day and does not name the man he blames. Few readers, however, would fail to identify the quotations and their author.

the General Assembly and though the immediate decision was a compromise, he again assumed "that this whole matter is set at rest."

> Was it any wonder [, Adger asks,] that the Board should rely on these assurances, should believe the question settled, and ignoring the manifest difference of opinion which exists in the church should expect the Assembly to pass that vote of censure?[24]

In the long run Adger does not despair. He thinks that gradually the Boards and their friends "will come to understand that there are two sets of opinions amongst us on this whole subject." In the meanwhile, Presbyterians being a free and independent sort, churches and Presbyteries will weigh the objections to the Board system on their own balances and let the powers that be think what they will.[25]

His outline of the objections is a model of clarity. He has "great faith in the reiteration of a true testimony."[26]

## OBJECTIONS TO THE BOARD SYSTEM AS ANALYZED BY JOHN BAILEY ADGER IN 1858[27]

I. The Board machinery is not Presbyterian.
   A. It is a relic of Congregational bondage.
   B. It presents all the paraphernalia of the Voluntary Societies.
   C. It presents the spectacle of a Committee of the Church electing multiple Presidents and Vice Presidents for itself, and the privilege of membership for $30.00, a directorship for $50.00.

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[24] The Southern Presbyterian Review, X:2 1858, p 292.

[25] The same.

[26] The same.

[27] The same, pp 292-296.

D. It goes beyond the administrative necessity of simple Committees of the Assembly; which Commit tees, and no more, the Assembly has a right to appoint.
E. It transfers powers from the Church court to a body composed perhaps of none of its own members.
F. It transfers powers from the Presbyterian Church court to a body organized and constituted after a Congregational fashion.
G. It transfers powers on an un-Presbyterian discretionary basis.

II. The Board machinery is an inefficient substitute for the direct action of the church.
A. How can a hundred scattered men ever meet together?
B. Their control is therefore only nominal.
C. The entire Board is thus in fact a sham.

III. The Board machinery is directly and positively injurious.
A. Breakwaters to protect the Assembly in time of storm? This claim proves that on the contrary, the Boards protect the Executive Committees <u>from</u> the Assembly.
B. The Boards are a separating wall between the Church and her benevolent operations, obstructing the flow of sympathy between the two.
C. The Board machinery stands in the way of Presbyteries doing their own work.
D. The Board machinery encourages the Presbyteries to neglect their own work.
E. The Board defames, belittles, and attacks the churches. In a word, the Board objurgates.

IV. The Board machinery is a system of centralization, inconsistent with the Presbyterian principle of parity.
A. Three of the four Boards are at one place.
B. The Board of Domestic Missions places a vast power of direct control of 600+ ordained men in the hands of one Secretary.

V. Solution: Abolish all the Boards and get rid of all these difficuties. Result: Central committees, conferring no dangerous power one man, serving only to equalize and distribute the resources of the church between the strong and the weak parts -- the established Presbyteries and the frontier at home and abroad.

Looking over John Bailey Adger's outline, we can note his essential agreement with Thornwell, one omission of emphasis, and a common point of vulnerability.

Where Thornwell devoted major attention to the proposition that the Church is limited in the building blocks and outline of her governmental machinery to the givens of the New Testament, Adger simply notes that the Church lacks discretionary power. The position is the same, but with Adger it is simply stated by title.

And Adger comes out clearly for the proposition that the replacement of the Boards by central Executive Committees will secure everything needed for direct church action, the goal of the reformers. Considering the major attention he devotes to the irresponsibility of the staff and the concentration of power in the executive head of the Board of Domestic Mission, it is remarkable that Adger does not consider the practical effect of the employing of any full-time staff by any part-time group which assembles only occasionally. The material seems to be in his hand for a further wariness, but at this stage of the debate Adger appears to feel that the replacement of the Boards by genuine Executive Committees will do all that is needed.

Unanswered is the unasked question: will these Committees, like the Committee on Church Extension in St. Louis, also be made up of people largely not members of the General Assembly, and scattered so as to be unable to meet? Adger has inveighed against this arrangement[28] and we can presume that he would oppose it in Executive Committees; but his table for solutions is sketchy in the extreme, compared with his table of objections.

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[28]The same, p 293.

During all this time in which we have been concentrating our attention on one aspect of the life of one branch of one tree in the family of churches in America, events in the nation have moved steadily and unsteadily over the course familiar to us by hindsight, but not always so clear to the participants in our Presbyterian story. Although at times, in an effort to discredit an opponent in a Presbyterian debate, a Boardman would deliberately play on sectional tensions originating in the nation, a plausible history of the Old School Presbyterian Church during the years from 1837 to 1861 could be composed around the theme of a religious people who saw themselves as symbolizing, supporting, and realizing the unity of the nation; and the greater the tensions which increasingly threatened to tear the nation apart, the greater the effort the Old School Presbyterians made to maintain their harmony and their unity despite all disagreements and all issues. The most divisive of issues they simply excluded from their deliberations; and where they found themselves in debate on church matters they could not avoid, most of the debaters tried to win within a framework of chivalry and courtesy which would leave room in the church for both winner and loser after the votes were taken.

This theme of national unity emerges prominently though briefly in the memorable General Assembly of 1858 as it met in the First Presbyterian Church of New Orleans. Benjamin Palmer was the host pastor. Forty-one years earlier, there had not been a protestant church in the city. Fourteen years earlier, New Orleans had still been the frontier city of the United States in the then Southwest. Palmer, supporting a proposal from the Synods of Mississippi and of Texas for a regional Committee of the Board of Domestic Missions to be located in New Orleans, turned all his considerable powers of oratory on in praise of the future of

the nation through New Orleans, gateway to the great Gulf. Soon five states would be flourishing where a handsbreadth earlier there was none and now there is Texas; the nation had leapt to the Pacific; who could tell how soon, in the Providence of God, the entire territory surrounding the Gulf of Mexico, would also be ours? New Orleans, the gateway to the Carribean, to Central America; national expansion, not national fratricide, was the theme adduced in support of regionalization of the Board of Domestic Missions, by the man who in three and a half short years would preach another rousing sermon -- a Thanksgiving Day sermon, which would be reprinted by the multiplied thousands and touch off the powder which was lying loose all across the deep South.[29]

Dr. Musgrave, Secretary of the Board, in an "elaborate and able" reply,

> feared that the establishment of branches of the Boards of the Church, in different sections of the country, would tend to sectionalize it. It was now eminently conservative, and its nationality was mainly due to its centralization through the Boards of the Church.[30]

But the project of a New Orleans Committee, as requested by the Synods of Mississippi and of Texas, was laid over until the next year, and the New Orleans Assembly went down in history to be remembered above all for its sessions on Foreign Missions. The statistics were little changed -- communicants in the Presbyterian Church were giving on the

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[29] The Southern Presbyterian Review, XI:2 1859, pp 274-280. "The glowing description of the future of our country, and of the Presbyterian Church, presented by Dr. Palmer, will seem visionary to all who look forward to the speedy dissolution of our Republic, but those who believe in its future integrity and continued prosperity, will hardly deem it extravagant," Adger commented.

[30] The same, p 279.

average of one cent each per week for Foreign Missions, the true measure (as the Reformers would maintain) of the triviality of the Boards, or of a church which could hypnotize herself into delusions of a competent system with such a record -- but 1858 was a year of deep and widespread Awakening in America, and of mutiny and massacre in India. One group of commissioners coming down the Mississippi to the Assembly had collected $500 amongst themselves to persuade the Captain to lay to in the middle of nowhere on the Sabbath, while they went ashore to worship with a surprized country church, and in turn entertained the congregation on board for evening service. The Committee on Arrangements arrived at the wharf in New Orleans to find the deck peopled only by deckhands, and not a Commissioner in sight. They were found below decks, rapt in prayer meeting and revival.[31]

Into this atmosphere Walter Lowrie came with an earnest account of the India martyrs. When he came to the place in which he was reminded of his own son --

> On this point I can scarcely trust myself to say anything.
>
> Ten years ago, the mysterious, but doubtless wise providence of God, permitted a Missionary, beloved by the whole Church, and most dear to me, to be murdered by men of violence and blood. That wound has never ceased to bleed.
>
> But when the sad intelligence was confirmed of the death of these beloved Missionaries and their wives, and two infant children, the intensity of that wound was increased many fold. I knew those brethren and sisters before they went out, some of them intimately, and we highly esteemed and loved them all.
>
> The martyrdom on the China Sea, and the martyrdom at Cawnpore, almost seem to me to have occurred about

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[31]The same, p 265.

> the same time, although in reality there were ten long years between them.
>
> But the same calmness in the immediate view of death marked them all. The one casting back his Bible, which he was then reading, into the boat, and when thrown into the sea turning and swimming towards the boat, till sternly repelled by the iron spears of his murderers, then calmly sinking into the arms of death; the others saying to each other, 'our last day has come,' engaging in prayer, and calmly permitting themselves to be bound, husband and wife together.[32]

-- the entire General Assembly melted away in tears. There is no need to wonder why Thornwell, even as he fought the Board system, prayed for the Boards, preached for the Boards, sent his offerings to the Boards. With all his heart he longed for the first-hand missionary word to be the daily life of the whole church in all her frame and members; but until that day came, he would work with what the Church had.

But the decade wanes; and we have one more General Assembly to consider before we enter the Sixties.

The place is Indianapolis; and for our purposes the following things need our attention.

First, a resolution asking for a comprehensive study of the Board of Domestic Missions called forth protracted debate, and passed:

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[32]The same, pp 284-285. Paragraphing added.

> The Bible which Walter Lowrie mentions is the one which his son threw back on deck of the sampan. The only thing its owner had saved earlier when shipwrecked on his way to China as a new missionary, it is now at the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

Resolved, 6. A Committee of ____ members shall be appointed by this Assembly, with instructions to confer with the Board, and report to the next Assembly what changes in the organization and methods of the Board are necessary, in order to its greater efficiency and wider usefulness.

This Committee is particularly charged to report on the expediency of the following measures:

The reduction of the number of members in the Board, and its organization somewhat after the form of the Committee on "Church Extension."

The removal of the Board to some place nearer the centre of the Western missionary fields.

The establishment of several Executive Committees and Corresponding Secretaries in different parts of the church, these officers to be invested with co-ordinate powers; or,

The establishment of a single central Executive Committee, with Advisory Committees and District Secretaries, as provided herein for the South-west.

The Committee will consider the question as to how many officers will be needed in the Central Board, and the division of labour among them.

The Committee will also report upon any other matters which they may find within the range of this inquiry.[33]

Second, there were complaints made to the General Assembly by some Domestic Missionaries. Bearing on the conduct of the Board under which they served, and on the conduct of its officers, they "were urged with a great deal of warmth, not to say acrimony." "The charges were triumphantly met," Charles Hodge reports, "by the Secretary, Dr. Musgrave. The power of that gentleman in debate[,]" as Hodge describes it, was more than sufficient to sweep complainers

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[33] Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, 31:3 July 1859, pp 551-552.

and complaints out the door.[34]

As Dr. Musgrave put it to the house near the end of his explanations,

> If, instead of coming here to find fault and complain of the Board for inefficiency, these missionaries had come and gratefully told us of what the Lord had done through their instrumentality; told us of their trials and successes; told us of what the Board had done for them, as well as what they had not done; if they had stirred our hearts by describing the crying wants of their field, and reciting what had already been accomplished, how they would have encouraged and strengthened us, and how much benefit might have been reflected upon them and their labours!
>
> But, doubtless, they do feel a cordial love for the Board; and if some of them have seemed to complain, it is rather to be attributed to their earnest zeal to accomplish more, than to any lack of grateful sentiment for what God has done.
>
> He thanked the Moderator and the Assembly for the courtesy extended to him, in permitting him thus to defend the Board, of which he is one of its officers; and expressed the hope that the whole discussion would result in good to the cause we all love.[35]

Third, one Reverend Dr. Edwards had some questions to raise, some complaints to make, and some recommendations to offer, in connection with the Board of Publication. He was offering them at the Assembly because, as he put it, "Boards are <u>screens</u> through which the public cannot always see." This Board ignored Assembly instructions unless they suited the Board; it was costliest of the Boards in terms of work done for money received and disbursed; it should extend its colportage; and several other things; among which

3. They ought to make a full exhibit of their

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[34] The same, p 555.

[35] The same, p 562.

accounts annually to the General Assembly.

As presented, it is difficult or impossible to understand them.

They should present a balance sheet, so that the Assembly could be fully satisfied in regard to receipts and expenditures.

This, he thought, had not been done, and he thought the Assembly should insist upon it.[36]

"After these remarks from Dr. Edwards," Dr. Hodge observes, but following refutations by Dr. B. M. Smith, a former Secretary of the Board, by Mr. Schenck, its present Secretary, and others, the vote was taken;

and the first resolution of the report, which is highly commendatory of the Board and of the manner of conducting its operations, was adopted unanimously.[37]

As Hodge suggests, whatever may be the thought of the propriety of arraigning the Boards and their officers before the public, the action of the Indianapolis Assembly offers sound indication of its expediency.[38]

Fourth, Dr. Benjamin Mosby Smith, who throughout this General Assembly had the distinct pleasure of serving as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Systematic Benevolence, and of reporting to the Assembly the progress made in this

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[36]The same, p 569. Paragraphing added. For further development in this connection, see Kenneth J. Foreman, Jr., Continuing Problems of American Presbyterian Board and Agency Administration in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, pp 508-509. TMS. In the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

[37]The same, pp 571-572.

[38]The same, p 573.

now fixed policy of the church to encourage regular giving in connection with worship, "submitted the following paper, which was adopted:

Resolved, That the following proposition be submitted to the next General Assembly; and meanwhile the attention of the Presbyteries be called to its terms:

That the Constitution of the Boards of Foreign Missions, Domestic Missions, Education, Publication, and the Committee of Church Extension, be modified in the following particulars:

1. That the number of members in these Institutions be limited to sixteen members --- eight ruling elders and eight ministers, to be elected in four classes.

2. That said Boards and Committee shall meet on the Thursday of the week succeeding the rising of the Assembly, and thereafter on their own adjournments; provided they do not meet less often than once monthly.

3. That nine members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.

4. That the duties devolving on the Executive Committee, as now constituted, shall devolve on the Boards and Church Extension Committee under the proposed organization; and that said Boards and Committee shall send up their records for review to the Assembly.

5. That at each meeting of the Assembly a committee shall be appointed on each of the Boards and Church Extension Committee, which shall consist of one member from each Synod represented in the Assembly; provided the number of members may be sufficient: to which committee, in addition to the ordinary duties performed by it, shall be added that of nominating suitable persons for the office of Secretaries of such Boards and Church Extension Committee.

Resolved, 2. That a committee of one member from each of the Boards and the Church Extension Committee be now appointed to prepare for the consideration of the next Assembly such other and special modifications of the existing Constitutions of said Boards and Church Extension Committee as may be required, should that

Assembly proceed to the adoption of the foregoing paper.[39]

A simple, straightforward set of proposals. A paper of thorough reform, offered by one of the original reformers. Today much of it would be old routine; but B. M. Smith knows that every item on it will have to be obtained over the dead bodies of those who view the issue as closed, and who view any change in the Board system as anathema.

Charles Hodge will not even mention it in his long annual review of this Assembly.

The Assembly adjourned with prayer, to meet next year in Rochester, New York, where after a year's opportunity for preparation, the two reforming papers will be docketed for debate.

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[39]The Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1859, pp 538-539.

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# DR. ROBERT A. ARCHER MAKES HIS WAY

Looking over the list of ministers and elders who have been elected by their presbyteries to serve as commissioners to the 1860 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, we are struck with the vast and continental distances many of them will have to be traversing to cover all the broken ground which lies between home and Rochester and back again. The country is seething along a river of events become as turbulent as the rapids above Niagara, with a distant roar and smoke hovering unseen but sensed around the bend of the year. We wonder, along with many a commissioner, if this may be our last chance to see our land in peace and to attend the General Assembly of our church while it is still undivided.

We determine to go to the Rochester General Assembly.

Simple children of an alien age, we shall have no idea of the true feeling of the Assembly until we have sat where they sat; and this includes getting there. Today's teleported commissioners, who step into the aluminum airlock, to emerge a few dozens of minutes later into its sister boarding tunnel two thousand miles away, arrive at a General Assembly with home feelings, home impressions, home thoughts, removed from home by only the briefest of snoozes.

Not so the Commissioners of 1860.

It will well repay us to make the trip with one of them. Not from too near, say from Syracuse, for that would not be typical, and not from too far, say from California, for then we might not get there at all, as happened one year to the man who was to preach the opening sermon.

As a happy medium we adjust the curl on our sideburns, and at 6:50 on the morning of May 10, 1860, we are at the depot in the settlement of Donalds, South Carolina, to join the party of Dr. Robert A. Archer, Ruling Elder Commissioner of the Presbytery of South Carolina, as he makes his way to Rochester.[1]

Dr. Archer is a physician from the Abbeville District. He is a pillar in the old Greenville Church -- not by any means a church in the village which will one day become a humming textile center of the same name, but a church in the country then as now, not far from the village of Due West,

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[1]The quotations and references which follow are until further notice taken from the 1860 Travel and General Assembly Diary of Robert A. Archer of Old Greenville Church in the Abbeville District, Ruling Elder Commissioner of South Carolina Presbytery, to the Rochester General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, May 10 - June 6, 1860, newly transcribed and edited for this study by Kenneth J. Foreman, Jr., and Ruth D. See, from the original manuscript on loan to the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

The writer is indebted to the Library of Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, for a Xerox copy of a Xerox copy of an earlier, incomplete, transcription of the Diary, which broke pioneer ground on decipherment of Dr. Archer's relatively difficult script; to the Reverend James White, pastor of Old Greenville Church, for his generous assistance in locating the

somewhere close to the Georgia border, more or less west of Columbia.

The Doctor, we soon realize, is a keen observer and a ready talker. Hardly have we been introduced and settled down on the cars with him, than we are reminded afresh how much harder it is for an elder to get to the General Assembly than it is for ministers and scholars who have no other more pressing occupation. "On two occasions previous to this I have been appointed a delegate to the Assemblies' meeting," Dr. Archer confesses to us, "but was disappointed in going once. And I declined the appointment as being impractical once. --- We have since fall meeting of Presbytery been thinking of going this time and though discouraging circumstances have occurred, yet we are now started."[2]

A railroad journey from Donalds is a new experience for us. We have seen that station in our own time, though have never used it. Not so for Dr. Archer.

> We are now started for a longer journey than we have ever made before, having scarcely been out of the

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beautifully preserved manuscript original; and to Mrs. Mary G. Lane, Research Librarian of the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina, for her invaluable help in providing contemporary atlases and maps and for checking and proofreading with her usual gracious care the full text arrived at by the editors, with special attention to doubtful readings.

Dr. John Leith, himself a son of Old Greenville Church, is responsible for having placed the Xerox of the earlier transcript in the Union Seminary Library, and to him should go credit for having first brought Dr. Archer to the attention of modern investigators of this period.

[2]P 1. Quotation from the Diary is by permission of the owner.

> state and not in many Districts of this State. We made a trip to Charleston on the cars from Newberry and to Augusta, Geo. & often times of shorter distances. We are leaving all well at home & hope & pray they may continue well.[3]

Cokesbury, Greenwood, Ninety-Six, the Sloody River (spelled Saluda), Silver Street, Bush River, Newberry -- the first of a thousand places and landmarks begin to clatter past us at fifteen and sometimes even twenty miles an hour. Prosperity, Pamaria, Alston, Broad River, Littleton Crossing, Cedar Creek, Cane Creek; and, at 1 PM, Columbia, 104 miles in only six hours and ten minutes, it raining in showers till noon and not many aboard.[4] "The soot has collected in quantities on platforms and lots of cars,"[5] Dr. Archer reports, and like him we notice that the wheat crops on which very much is depending do not seem to be doing well. The Oats look better. Corn very promising -- some of it already 18 inches high. As far as Broad River we observe that much of the large timber is dead. "Very little Chestnut of much size living," he points out, "and much oak timber has died in a few years past. There are difficulties in accounting satisfactorily for this."[6] We discover that Dr. Archer has the diagnostician's eye and the scientist's discontent with mystery!

Columbia is as much a shock to us as it is a pleasure

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[3] P 2.

[4] P 2; p 6.

[5] The same.

[6] Pp 4-5.

to the good doctor and his wife, who find it "a beautiful town, situated on the east side of Congaree river just below the junction of Broad and Saluda."[7] We are familiar with that bare and rocky Congaree, and one of our shocks is to discover that Columbia boasts conveniences long vanished in our own times, "R. R. cars the 130 miles to Charleston running twice a day, and steamboats ply constantly from here to Charleston."[8] Two or three years have passed in getting the new State House to its present stage of construction on its smart eminence with the commanding view, Dr. Archer tells us, "and probably as long a time will be required for its completion." What amount is proposed to bestow on the building, Archer adds, he does not know, but as a taxpayer he supposes that it must be large.[9]

Three hours later we are at the Charlotte Depot in Columbia and on our way again only half an hour late -- but with a very gentlemanly conductor.[10] Dr. Archer introduces us to Dr. Adger and the Reverend Joseph Hillhouse, the only other Commissioners on board whom he knows.[11] Dr. Thornwell, we are disappointed to learn, will not be leaving today,[12] but Dr. Adger has done what he can to make up for the absence of his colleague: he has in company with him "fifteen females and one Gentleman Dr. Wells."[13]

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[7] P 6.

[8] The same.

[9] Pp 6-7.

[10] P 9.

[11] The same.

[12] The same.

[13] P 9.

Ridgeway, Adgers, White Oak, Younguesville, Blackstock, Cornwell; nightfall; Chesterville, Rocky Creek, Lewis Turnout, South Fishing Creek, Smiths Turnout, Stoney Fork, Big Fishing Creek, Rock Hill,

> then cross Catawba River, a large stream and the only one of much size, pass Fort Mills cross Steel Creek, then Sugar Creek. Then we cross the N. C. line by Morrows to Charlotte 107 miles from Columbia.
>
> Here we would like very much if it were day or if we could stop and stay all night. We are all now drowsy and weary. We took a snack of cold suppers with our friends early in the night. Reached here about a quarter after eleven.
>
> Change cars at Charlotte - Leaving Charlotte on we go.[14]

In the night without being able to see much, while the ladies drowse, we run through Salisbury, Lexington, Greensboro, Hillsboro, Alamance, and cross the Yadkin and Haw Rivers, all from Rock Hill onwards the heart of the Presbyterian Piedmont country - pass not far from Chapel Hill - reaching Raleigh at 5 in the dawn of Friday morning. Mostly thin ridge land and dwarfy timber --- and "the usual productions of home - corn - wheat, oats & cotton." "We are now 268 miles from Columbia and 370 from home," Dr. Archer notes. "Good 24 hours," he adds, and we change cars again at Raleigh, noticing the State House of granite, with columns 5 1/2 feet in diameter and 30 feet high.[15]

The first dining cars are still in the future. "Some distance, 20 or 25 miles from Raleigh, is what is called breakfast house," Dr. Archer will be telling his friends

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[14] Pp 11-13.

[15] Pp 14-15.

when he gets back home to Donalds. "There is complaints at this house but I have seen worse doings." This part of Carolina has more rivers than sights. The Neuse. The Tar. Nothing important until the Roanoke River, crossed on a high Bridge, though we see Dr. Archer noting down all the hamlets, especially Forestville "where is Wakeforest College."[16]

From Raleigh to Weldon, 97 miles; and another change of cars. "We run quite fast on the Charlotte and North Carolina Roads," Dr. Archer remarks, and we agree with the reputation of the Columbia to Raleigh section, "claimed to be the best road South."[17] Here at Weldon Dr. Adger and his company take the train for Chesapeake Bay, while the Archers hold with their tickets, which read via Richmond.

We pass Hicksford, cross

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Meherrin River. Then Nottoway river passing through Greenville & Dinwiddie County to Petersburg 30 miles from Weldon, we cross the Appomatox river just at Petersburg, a large & beautiful city. Here we change cars and going one or two miles in omnibus, come to other depot. We pass along some fine houses but mostly on the edge of the city. From Petersburg we go - leaving between 3 & 4 p.m. for Richmond. We have passed along a beautiful country this p.m. The residences are commandingly located & fine. The wheat looks well, the clover very pretty. The corn just planting - delightful country.

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Arriving at Richmond, 22 miles from Petersburg, about 6 p.m. 70 miles from Weldon. At Richmond we cross James River - wide stream on high bridge not so large a stream as I expected. Shockoe creek runs through the center and the town built on the two hills - The capitol a fine & costly building on the brow of Shockoe hill.

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[16] P 16.

[17] Pp 17, 14.

In view of the road is a magnificent statue of Washington. Here we are conveyed through the city by hacks from one to two miles. The statue of Washington is mounted and very imposing.

Page 20

Nearly dark when we are ready for leaving. Here we see some of the finest draught horses I ever saw and the most impertinent hackmen. There has been several showers on us today & rain all along the road, especially near Petersburg - A negro killed by lightening between Weldon & Richmond. Before getting fairly started ran the spikes of cowcatcher in cow & stated by one of the carhands that it had been killed the night before causing much uneasy feelings. Fannie feels quite anxious & wearied. But hope we reach safely the distant point.[18]

As Dr. Archer notes down the facts of our journey we are impressed again and again (through the hindsight of another century) with the fact that rail travel so far is broken at cities and rivers by omnibus rides, ferries, anything -- the lines may look like through sinews on the map, but they are anything but that for the traveller and his baggage, or for freight. If these railway lines in the South ever come to be the lifeline of the region, before they are knit together better, we can see serious troubles in the offing. Still, there has been much to see, and we who through childhood have been appalled at the run-down look of eastern North Carolina and southside Virginia are fascinated with Dr. Archer's account of that countryside, made on the spot as he saw it at first hand in 1860:

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The travel today has been very interesting. The country very fine, the land rich, the residences finely located & good with extensive plains, with the clover & grass, wheat & oats as fine and recollecting this as

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[18] Pp 18-20.

the former home of our Foreparents, thinking of their conversations about the country all tends to make the ride interesting though serious.

We pass through Henrico - Hanover - Caroline & Spottsylvania counties - crossing crossing the Pamunky and several smaller streams, sources of the York river, to Fredericksburg, 61 miles from Richmond. There are goodly num-

Page 22

ber of passengers & though no little uneasiness exists on account of recent heavy rains & supposed excitement of the managers -, yet we got along safe - It rains with hard blow from N.E. the early part of the night.

We come to and pass Fredericksburg about 12 o'clock at night. It is situated on Rappahannock River. A pretty stream & fine falls - valuable water power. On the opposite bank of the river the farm of Genl Washington's Father was - the house in which he lived has been demolished long since. Crossing the river we go on 15 miles to Aquia

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Creek.

Here we take a steam boat for Washington City about half after 12 night. Still raining some and blowing pretty hard N.E.

Never being on steamboat to go any distance we know but little of the matter. The Boat rocked some but not badly. All returned to state rooms or slept on the lounges so in a little while all was still. We kept a light burning. Fannie slept a little. At day light we got to the great city of Washington. The view was very pretty. The river was dotted with various little ships or sail vessels of different sizes.[19]

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[19]Pp 21-23. If we were astounded at the steamer traffic between Columbia and Charleston, no words can express our consternation at finding steam navigation on Aquia Creek.

Dr. Archer is well placed; we discover that colonels and generals are his friends and guides wherever he goes. After rest and breakfast we set out with him for the unfinished Capitol, surprised with him "to see so few workmen engaged on this building considering how much there is to do."[20] The Congressional Cemetery and the Navy Yard are next; we see the manufacturing of percussion cases, minnie rifle balls, and so forth, and among the trophies see some of John Brown's pikes, captured at Harper's Ferry. The ground is so wet the ladies have hard going, but when the rain stops we push on to the Smithsonian Institute.

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Here there is much to interest in all the different branches of science. What a noble opportunity for studying if access could be freely had. The extensive grounds in front & around the building has some rare specimens of flowers and shrubs but very few of them. The most of the ground not planted. This was a noble bequest from a foreigner by birth....The Smithsonian Institute was founded by a bequest of Mr. Smithson, an Englishman by birth but living at the time of his death & some time previous in Washington City. Here one might spend a week and be interested.[21]

Weary and content at the end of the day, Dr. Archer remembers Richmond as the third State Capitol we had come to, and Ashland as a nice place which supplied supper to the hopeful passengers. On reaching Washington City, we confirmed by a look at the careful figures in the Doctor's diary that we have been on the road 48 hours and are now 670 miles from home. The 24 hours since Raleigh brought us 300 miles.

Tomorrow is Sunday, a day of rest. We need it and

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[20] P 25.

[21] Pp 27, 31.

shall be twice at church.

And Monday most especially is going to be a day to remember, for on Monday we are going to the White House to pay our respects to President Buchanan; and in the streets we shall see history made.

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Monday morning May 14th, we rested comfortable and have a pleasant clear morning. This being the day for the Japanese Landing. The city gets quite early in a stir. All vehicles are brought into service that is possible. We have engaged two carriages and propose this morning through the kindness of our friend Col. A. to make a visit to the White House & pay our respects to the President.

We, the company before named - alighted at the mansion and passed into the East room. Here we interested ourselves by viewing the lawns on either side with their fonts & pools & the rich furniture

Page 36

until we learn his convenience to see us.

We pass up a flight of steps & soon find ourselves in his august presence. We are each respectively introduced to his majesty.

He was easy, courteous & pleasant & engaged in conversation with Fannie for a short time. There were some 3 or 4 gentlemen in the room before us. One of them was corrected by Mr. Buchanan in a remark respecting the Japanese Embassy Landing very confidently made. Mr. Buchanan at once referred to the morning paper and assured him of his mistake. The call here was short of course and very

Page 37

agreeable.

We return quite pleased with mild, sympathetic, philanthropic, firm - intellectual appearance. He seems feeble & delicate though fleshy.

From here we are conducted by our friends to the office room of Genl. Case. He was very pleasant & is

certainly a man of talent - he has quite a degree of firmness & originality of thought.

The Japanese Landing is the subject of conversation with all & Mr. Case took occasion to remark that this was the first Japanese Embassy by Governmental orders. The formal Embassy to Rome etc. two or three centuries since was not governmental.

This call was also very agreeable. We leave and call at the

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Patent Offices. First however we view the lawn in front of the White House. Here we see the Statues of Washington & Jackson mounted. They are said to be very good. The places involved in the Sickles affair are pointed out to us. His house, the clubhouse, the spot where the encounter was etc. Sickles & wife are here now but do not visit, have a more private house. At the Patent office we take rather a hasty look - though very much interested and drive to the Hotel.[22]

Admiral Perry's expedition has begun to have its effect, and the truth is, we are even more intrigued than Dr. Archer and his friends. In the air of the capital they are conscious of impending civil war but do not know what we know of another, later and most uncivil war which this first Japanese landing on the Potomac foreshadows. Some of the children we see lining the streets will still be living when we in our turn ride through the night to Washington City to be able to sit in the galleries watching Congress convene on another unforgettable Monday morning less than a hundred years later, on December 8th in 1941.

At Hotel we stop till Col. A. rides to his room & returns to go with us which

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he kindly proposed to do on reaching there. We, through

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[22]Pp 35-38. Paragraphing added.

our friend's kindness, get into the office. As the hour is near at hand frequent cries of they come excited the assembled multitude to tiptoe to catch the view. After awhile it is announced & repeated they are coming. When every head is stretched & every eye gazing the cannon then announces they are in view & continues to reverberate till the vessel stops.

They land & pass through a space formed by columns on either side. The military companies are out & look very fine. They are in

Page 40

front & rear. While the Japanese are accommodated to carriages & hacks & c. and press on towards the hotel.

Up to main Street some 100 yards there is a mass of human beings. This is the largest assembly I ever witnessed. We waited patiently for the press to get started & herein had a good opportunity of viewing the dense columns filling the streets & stretching for half a mile. As Mr. Buchanan's carriage was waiting we presumed Miss Lane was still in the office. But after a time we learned she is in some one of the officers' houses. We return safe to Hotel well pleased

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and thankful that no accident occured.[23]

...The Japanese are about 70 in number - a few royal blood Princes. They are smaller and much darker than the English. Darker than the Indians I think and smaller. - The

Page 43

Doctors two of whom are along shave the head entire. All shave it in part but wear a queue on top. Wear no hat, ordinarily slippers, shoes and gowns.[24]

We expect to leave in the morning, Tuesday the 15th. "The three days we have passed here have been spent very

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[23]Pp 38-41. Paragraphing added.

[24]Pp 42-43.

pleasantly,"[25] Dr. Archer thinks. Mrs. Archer made warm friends at the Hotel and enjoyed the company there almost as much as we were charmed by the hospitality of Col. A. and Genl. B.

Still, the keen eye of the Doctor and the state of the nation have led to a somber entry in his diary, made as we came back from the Navy Yard. As we set out for Baltimore, 40 miles away over a good road, the cars well filled, we are still pondering it.

> At the Navy yard[, Dr. Archer had written, in that quick neat illegible hand of his,] we see a number of cannon taken as prizes or trophies in war[, s]ome of which are previous to the Revolution and some in our past conflict with Mexico[, a]s well as the implements of war both on land and sea - some of which would be difficult to assign any use of.
>
> This is indeed a place of interest.
>
> The thought that these implements of war may ere long be used [in] one section of this country is terrible yet how probable.[26]

How many commissioners to our 1860 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, carry in their hearts this same terrible yet probable vision? Our church and our nation can entertain her citizens and these ambassadors from distant lands with a still undivided hospitality; but Dr. Archer has written in his diary the unspoken thought of the vast majority of his countrymen.

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[25] P 43.

[26] P 30,

Baltimore is the traveller's nightmare, a mile and a half drive from station to station through the city, baggage not arriving in time to be loaded on board, Dr. Archer in a fine passenger's sweat but assured by the prototype of Pennsylvania Railroad baggagemasters that it will all arrive -- "if we would stop in Philadelphia two hours."[27]

> We see a considerable part of the business portion of Baltimore, on one side business houses of all descriptions & a great many railway tracks on which the cars go by horse power & on the other side is the arm of the river or Bay of Chesapeake
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> Page 47
>
> with channels or inlets where are a great number of vessels of all descriptions almost. We were quite uneasy during the ride from Baltimore although the Baggage man promised to try to get them yet he did not seem confident - and he had our checks too. I consented to return or stop over as might be thought advisable.
>
> At Baltimore we cross Patapsco river & run near the Bay for some distance crossing Back & Bush rivers - short but large streams. We pass no important place till we come to Havre de Grace from
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> Page 48
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> which place the telegraphic message is sent. Here we meet a train going the other direction called lightning train.
>
> Here we cross Susquehanna river very near its entrance in the bay. We cross in steamboat though there is above the Boat channel a track across the river on which sleeping cars run at night. This is considerable of a place. The Susquehanna canal connecting Pennsylvania Canal with the Bay terminates here. From here after crossing the river getting in another train we are on the way for Philadelphia.
>
> We pass
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> Page 49
>
> Elkton & cross there a considerable stream. Then

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[27] P 46.

> Wilmington, a very pretty & quite a large town in Delaware - get on the Bottom lands and in sight of Delaware river come to Chester in Pennsylvania & along not far from the river to Philadelphia.
>
> This is an interesting farming region. The grass & clover & wheat look fine indeed, while the residences are all good and situated on elevations. Before reaching the city we cross in steamboat Schuylkill river. We are 97 miles from Baltimore and 137 from Washington City.[28]

After Havre de Grace the cuisine of what was to be the Pennsylvania catches up with us. "We took a snack whilst crossing the river," Dr. Archer confesses, "but taking it in a hurry we feel badly after....But the coffee is not very good and we eat hurriedly."[29]

Philadelphia -- Congressional Hall -- the mint -- the College -- many very fine dry goods stores where there seemed much business doing, their streets blocked -- many magnificent residences -- the customs house, a large and elegant building -- more to see in the two hours between trains than humanly possible, but all jotted down in Dr. Archer's little leather-bound booklet.

> - [O]ur thoughts being more on the baggage than the city we get to the depot 28 minutes to 3. After waiting till 3 the train comes & I am told the baggage
>
> Page 52
>
> is here - Now we feel better. We could have enjoyed the ride oh so much more if could have known how it would be. We hastily make ready for leaving - cheerfully pay 50 cts for the telegraphic dispatch. But then I have another unjust demand to pay - hack fair - half dollar. Had we not stopped they would not charge us, this was certainly any thing but fair. To be

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[28] Pp 46-49.

[29] Pp 49-50.

compelled to stop for their want of attention & then pay for it. We also paid half the hire of carriage half dollar and I think half dollar for transporting baggage to the other depot, where we have to go to get checks.[30]

We observe a great many vessels on the Schuylkill river[, Dr. Archer notes,] & on arriving at the other depot which is on Delaware river there is likewise a great many sail vessels - small and a number of steam vessels. At the northern Delaware Depot in due time & get baggage checks (cross the river in an excellent boat & once more find driver so that is righted).

I think to profit thus much by the delay - the anxiety & the expense - that I will try to have more firmness, more decision of character hereafter. So we are all right & on the train from Philadelphia for New York.

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From Philadelphia we run along almost on the Banks of Delaware, seldom out of view of it, to Bristol. Here we cross the river in steamboat.

And rather soon after passing Bristol then come to Trenton in New Jersey, the capital of the state situated on East bank of the river & about the head of steamboat navigation 29 miles from Philadelphia. Not a very large place, 8000 inhabitants. There we pass near Princeton, 3.9 miles over is the college of New Jersey & the Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Next we come to New Brunswick situated on the river, 55 miles from Philadelphia. Here is a Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church.

After passing this last

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place, cross the Raritan river. This is the largest town we have come to in N. J.

Then to Elizabethtown on a creek of same name, then to Newark, a large town situated on Passaic River. We also pass Rahway between Elizabethtown & New Bruns-

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[30] Pp 51-52. The city of Brotherly Love, we see, has long cultivated its peculiar way of encouraging the traveller on his way.

wick to Jersey City & then cross the Hudson or as they call the North river to New York, reaching the Depot 8 h 20 m. p.m. We conclude to go to 5th Avenue Hotel - & fortunately get our baggage on the carriage. We ride a long way - but being dark we can not see much of the city in passing.

At this Hotel we see much grand magnificent furniture. The bedrooms have a fine chandelier, splendid

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bureau, rich silk curtains &c. &c. At supper we are not much pleased - the meat raw. But had an improvement made on same.

Early in the morning, Wednesday, 17th May are up and preparing. We have rested well. At least tolerable well. Leaving one pipe of the chandelier burning on retiring was woke late in the night by a strange noise & unusual burning of the gas - rang for servant who adjusted it. He supposed too much gas was entering the pipe.

After a short & hasty breakfast we are by 7 a.m. in the hack for depot. On reaching depot we seem to be again subject to disappointment. The baggage hasn't come & what are we to do. The waggon

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started before we did[. J]ust before the train was ready to leave[, i]t came, having through mistake carried it to another depot & then hurried on here being just time enough for us to get checks & get in the car - paying the fare $7.55 each - $15.10§. -

We are seated in the car comfortably and move on right on the bank of Hudson river. A splendid stream dotted by innumerable vessels small & great - we are on the water edge sometimes over past where the river widens. There are a number on board the cars all filled & I suppose a goodly number going to Rochester. We pass Sing Sing prison - where is quite a considerable town. 32 miles from

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New York.

Then Peekskill, a large village on a high eminence. Not far from here Arnold was staying when meditating by treachery the destruction of his country.

Then West Point 51 miles on the other side of the river. Cornwall 57 miles, Newburgh 61 miles, Poughkeepsie 75 miles, Rondout 84 miles, Catskill 110 miles, Hudson 116 miles, Stockport 120 miles, cross here Kinderhook Creek, Coxsackie Landing 123 miles, Stuyvesant 126 miles, New Baltimore 136 miles & on crossing the river in a steamboat we come to Albany about 11 a.m. This has been a delightful ride - the road very good the seats wide & easy, the scenery very grand indeed.

- Made but

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short stop in Albany. This is a large city - the capital of N.Y. & medical college & fine Anatomical Museum & many fine buildings may be seen from the railway track.

We learn from the conversation of passengers that a goodly number of them are delegates to the Assembly. We made the acquaintance of Mr. Cruikshank from Brooklyn, a lay delegate and a very kind gentleman we found him to be. He was very communicative and polite. At Albany 145 miles from N.Y. the travel has been thus far truly pleasant.

Everything indeed seem to conspire to make it so. There has been recent rain & the cars

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& the road are truly good and the scenery surely cannot be excelled. With the beautiful Hudson on one side and the overhanging cliffs, precipitous hills & mountains tend to interest the travelers that can be interested by anything.

Indeed, he who can make this trip without being interested in the scenery must be intensely stupid or he must have a wicked designing heart. Here we cross the Hudson river in good boat. Having run up on the eastern side - over to Albany. Here we take another train for our point of destination. We find the road very good, the cars very comfortable. This is the N. Y. Central road.

After

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running 17 miles we are at Schenectedy, a considerable

place. Here is Union College - an old institution with many alumni. It is situated on South Bank of Mohawk river.

The Erie Canal extending from the lake of same name and running along with Mohawk river near its terminus - is from 300 to 400 miles long - and has been a source of great wealth to the company & to the whole country. It connects with Hudson river some distance above Albany at Lansingburg - the road running still near the canal & Mohawk river.

74 miles from Albany come to Rockton. Here the river has a fall 42 ft. We are passing over a very dry

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section - farms are needing rain & the dust is disagreeable.

At Utica 95 miles. Here stop 30 minutes for dinner & a very good one with good time. This is a large city occupying the site of Fort Schuyler on the bank of Mohawk river & Erie Canal - State Lunatic Asylum here Rome on the bank of Mohawk river 109 miles from Albany on to Syracuse 148 miles from Albany - near Onondaga Lake, passed not far back, Oneida Lake on the right. Here they make 4,000,000 bushels salt a year employing 3000 persons. This is a large city.

From Syracuse we pass in sight of several lakes, Skaneateles, Owasco, & Cayuga. We pass several very

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pretty towns. Palmyra is a very pretty place - on to Rochester reaching here about 8 p.m. we cross Gennessee river on which the city is situated in view of the falls. We take a carriage and go to Eagle Hotel. Here we find that we are at our point of destination.

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Thursday morning, 17th May. We have rested comfortable and feel tolerable this morning. The Eagle Hotel where we are staying near to & in full view of the church, the third Presbyterian at which the Assembly meets. This morning is cloudy & cool though not at all disagreeable. Called over, found committee in Lecture room, handed my commission, was assigned a

place.[31]

We are arrived. The Commissioners are swarming over the Third Presbyterian Church. Each one comes as intimately impressed with his distance from home as we are, and with as intimate a memory of the intervening ground. At 11 o'clock on the morning of Thursday, June 17th, a week and a day and four hours after we clambered into the cars at Donalds, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America is opened with prayer by Dr. Magill, Dr. William L. Breckinridge being absent.[32]

Our sideburns are all out of curl, and there are still some ashes in our hair; but we see that Dr. Hodge and Dr. Thornwell have arrived.

We believe that the trip will have been worth it.

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[31] Pp 53-64.

[32] P 64.

# CONFRONTATION IN ROCHESTER

The great confrontation on the administration of missions in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America took place at the 1860 General Assembly, held in Rochester, New York. Three former Moderators were commissioners and took active part in the debate, which as usual continued off and on at intervals, and for nearly a week.[1]

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[1]The primary sources for a study of this pivotal Assembly in the history of the Presbyterian Church are the Minutes of the proceedings, which are invaluable but imperfect, being a record of actions only and not a Journal from which the course of debate and the nature and quantity of proposed actions which failed of passage can be obtained; the detailed account in The Southern Presbyterian Review by John Bailey Adger, Commissioner to the Assembly from the Presbytery of Charleston, who took part in the debate and checked his entire manuscript with James Henley Thornwell before publication; the accounts by Charles Hodge in the Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, based on his observations as a Commissioner from the Presbytery of New Brunswick; the account by James Henley Thornwell in his reply to Charles Hodge's article "Presbyterianism"; the accounts in the religious and secular press; the correspondence of commissioners and observers of the Assembly; and the Diary of Dr. Robert A. Archer, Ruling Elder Commissioner from South Carolina Presbytery.

At no time was an action, resolution, overture, report or proposal before the house which placed the subject of the administration of missions in its abstract, theoretical or basic form. Rather, as Adger accurately reports, the subject came up in three different and typically concrete ways.

> First: There was a Committee appointed by the last Assembly to consider the expediency of reducing the number of members of the Board of Domestic Missions, and of the removal of the seat of its operations from Philadelphia nearer to the Western field; and to report such other suggestions as are deemed important to increase the efficiency of that Board. Of this Committee, Dr. E. P. Humphreys was chairman, but not present at this Assembly. Drs. Thornwell and Boardman, were the only present members of the Committee.
>
> Again: There was a Committee also appointed, by the last Assembly, on the re-organization of all the Boards, and of the Church Extension Committee. Dr. B. M. Smith was chairman, and he induced the present Assembly to enlarge the Committee, so that it might be made to consist of fifteen members.
>
> Thirdly: This same discussion came up, naturally and necessarily, upon the report of the Standing Committee, to whom the Domestic Board's Annual Report was referred.[2]

The initial difficulty, Adger believes, lodges in the fact that "the Committee stood equally divided upon the main points they had in hand," and as a result its report was "a patched-up and indefinite affair," read by Dr. Boardman.

> We could wish[, Adger comments,] that, instead of uniting in one common report that could mean nothing, they had brought forward two separate reports, each of them presenting, in writing, a clear and definite statement of the views held on that side.[3]

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[2] J[ohn] B[ailey] Adger, "The General Assembly of 1860," The Southern Presbyterian Review, XIII:2, April 1861, pp 356-357.

[3] The same, p 356.

"Coming up in these three ways on the first Friday afternoon of the Assembly," Adger tells us, "the discussion ran on with frequent, and some times long intervals, until the second Friday afternoon."[4] Debate in the Presbyterian General Assembly could be, and occasionally was, brought to a close while members still wished to speak, but on the whole the freedom for extended development of a commissioner's position was much more like that still obtaining today in the United States Senate than in Twentieth Century Presbyterian General Assemblies north or south.

Dissatisfaction with the "patched-up" nature of the report apparently led to further conference between those members of the Committee who were present.

> In the afternoon, Dr. Boardman re-stated the points of the report in a new and brief form, which, with Dr. Thornwell's consent, he had given to them during the interval. As thus drawn out, the first point was in the shape of a resolution, that "it is inexpedient to make any organic change in the organization of the Board of Domestic Missions."
>
> In this form the subject was debated, and in this form the question was at last put.[5]

With the materials which have survived and presently known to exist, we cannot form a firm judgment as to why Thornwell agreed, as Adger implies that he did agree and as he certainly at any rate allowed, for this particular statement of the question to be put forward. Adger feels that the concession had an important bearing on the ultimate decision of the General Assembly, at least in degree if not in kind.

We think an undue advantage was generously con-

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[4]The same, p 357.

[5]The same, pp 357-358.

ceded by Dr. Thornwell, in allowing this form to be given to the really undecided recommendation of the Committee, for it brought insensibly upon the house the influence of the whole Committee against any organic changes.

But, however this may be, we know positively that the employment of the term "organic" operated unfavorably for the minority. There can be no doubt that the majority of the Assembly favored changes, the very changes which the minority were urging; the subsequent votes made that unquestionable. But very many of the voters did not consider these changes to be "organic changes," and they were not willing to vote that there ought to be any "organic changes."

Accordingly, they voted thus against the principle of changes, although, afterwards, for the actual practice of them.[6]

The debate itself is fascinating for its personalities and for their skill in oratory, rather than for any influx of new ideas added to those we have already seen advanced by the opposing schools in the years leading up to Rochester.

Hodge and Thornwell are each truly great public speakers in the style of their day. The main body of what they said was taken down verbatim on the spot, and is most conveniently available to us in Adger's account in The Southern Presbyterian Review and in Hodge's in the Princeton Review. Both men have an orderly grasp of their argument. Even in transcription, they turn on the electricity. Both deplore an opponent's weaknesses with scathing politeness and anguished concern.

Both betray individual mannerisms in the later exchanges; Thornwell relishes a typical back-country Southern anecdote to make fun of Hodge's logic, and Hodge does not think the

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[6]The same, p 358.

Alabama turtle story funny. Hodge gets drawn off into snap descriptions of Presbyterianism, which cost him a public admission by his colleague Dr. McGill that though McGill is pained to admit of diversity at Princeton, and even more pained to admit of a difference with Hodge, still McGill agrees with Thornwell's ecclesiology and has to disagree with Hodge's views on the eldership. Thornwell admits to being long of logic; Hodge admits to being Presbyterianism personified.

Some identifiable realities emerge clean-cut from the exchanges.

1. Ably supported by B. M. Smith and John B. Adger, Thornwell founds his argument on the twin pillars of, first --

a) the church's lack of discretionary power to set up church machinery beyond the building blocks and frame given in the New Testament:

> Smith: There are two ways of administering Church government: one is upon the principles of Divine government, and the other is by expedients, devised of men to meet present emergencies.
>
> Upon the former plan, the Church may incur particular inconveniences from time to time, but, in the end, that plan must always be found wisest and best. Upon the latter, the Church may be relieved of present evils, but at the expense of greater ultimate disadvantages.[7]
>
> Thornwell: Our differences about Boards spring legitimately from our differences as to the nature and constitution of the Church.
>
> There are amongst us those who hold that God gave us our Church government, as truly as He gave us our

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[7] The Southern Presbyterian Review, XIII:2, April 1861, p 358. Paragraphing added.

doctrines; and that we have no more right to add to the Church government, which is Divine, than to add to the doctrine, which is Divine.

They hold that while the Church may, of course, employ whatever agency is really necessary to do the work entrusted to her, for that is implied in the very command which enjoins her duty, yet she has no discretionary power to create a new Church Court or judicatory, or body, of whatever name, to stand in her own place.

Others, as wise and as good men as the first, believe no definite form of Church government is of Divine origin, but God has left it to man or organize His Church; and that just as civil government was ordained of God in the general, but man is left to arrange its particular form as may, in his view, best suit particular circumstances. So Church government may be modified according to circumstances --- according to human ideas of expediency, at the whims of men.

[In this view,] God gave only general principles, and man is to work out of them the best system that he can.

Thus, one party amongst us holds that Christ gave us the materials and principles of Church government, and has left us to shape them pretty much as we please. But the other holds that God gave us a Church, a constitution, laws, presbyteries, assemblies, presbyters, and all the functionaries necessary to a complete organization of His kingdom upon the earth and to its effective operation; that He has revealed an order as well as a faith, and that as our attitude in the one case is to hear and believe, in the other it is to hear and obey.

And of one of these parties the motto is "you may do all that the Scriptures do not forbid;" of the other, "you can do only what the Scriptures command."[8]

-- and, the other pillar:

b) on the practical uselessness and positive harm of the Boards:

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[8]The same, p 361. Paragraphing added.

Thornwell: Let us look at the principles of action which have governed these creations and we shall see still more plainly that they are complete organizations, and, also, that they work evil and not good.

The practical ends of the Boards have been two.

1st. They aim to awaken interest;

2d. To increase funds.

As to the first end, the idea was that there must be a body specially devoted to awakening the missionary spirit in the Church. The missionary spirit was not to be the healthful action of the Church's life, but a substitute for it; something worked up in the Church's bosom by special influences and excitements. There must be a large institution or society in the bosom of the Church, corresponding to the American Board of Missions, and men must be stimulated into missionary zeal by being invested with the honorable distinction of membership. Thus a set of men were selected who were, by this means, to have the spirit of missions kindled in them. Now, was not this destructive of the idea that the Church is the body to be interested: Must not this have weakened the general influence of the idea that the Church herself is a Missionary Society, and that every member of the Church is to have a part and to be responsible for a share in the work?

But the other end to be gained was the increase of funds....[9]

Adger: [We are told] that the receipts from the Churches last year [for this Board of Domestic Missions] were $83,302.19.

Do you call this doing well for a Church numbering about 300,000 members, with 2,600 Ministers and nearly 2,500 congregations?

Why, Moderator, the children of the Presbyterian Church probably spent that much last year for sugar candy! The Ministers of the Presbyterian Church, perhaps, smoked and chewed up that amount more in tobacco!

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[9]The same, pp 365. Paragraphing added.

> Talk of $83,000 for Domestic Missions being well enough for our rich Church! Why, sir, over one million of dollars annually would not be too much for her resources --- nor would it be too much for her liberality either, if you would approach her in the right way, as you are not now doing.[10]

2. Well backed by Gardiner Spring, Henry A. Boardman, and others, Hodge meets the first issue squarely by asserting the freedom and discretion of the church, in the most unmistakable terms and tone ever recorded on this subject since the beginning of creation:

> Hodge: We cannot receive and our Church has never held, the High-Church doctrines about organization for which the brethren contend.
>
> The Spirit of God dwelling in the Church and guiding her by His Word and providence, in our view, must shape her efforts and her agencies; and, under the dispensation of the Spirit, far more is left to the discretion of the brotherhood of faith than under the ancient economy.
>
> But now we are called upon to believe that a certain form of Church government and order, in all its details and with all its appliances for the evangelical work, is revealed in the Word, and that we are as much bound to receive this form as to receive the articles of faith: That order is as much a matter of revelation as faith.
>
> We cannot do it and we wont do it. The burden was too heavy for our fathers, and we cannot bear it.[11]
>
> [Originally] the opposition [to our Boards] came from Congregationalism. Now it comes (I say it with great respect for my brother Thornwell) from hyper-hyper-hyper-hyper-High-Church Presbyterianism.[12]
>
> Now, sir, our Church never did receive this yoke,

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[10]The same, p 376.

[11]The same, p 369. Paragraphing added.

[12]The same, p 370. Paragraphing added.

and she wont receive it.... She must be free. She must breathe. The power of the Church is where the Holy Ghost is: but in externals He has given her discretion. I glory as much as does my brother Thornwell in the principles of Presbyterianism; they are the glory of the land, and are working for the salvation of the world; but one of those principles, and a most important one, is freedom in that which the Bible leaves to the discretion of His people.[13]

[It] is preposterous to expect that so heavy a yoke can be received by those whom Christ has made free.

This is too great a burden --- the Church can't receive it --- and we wont receive it.

Our Christian liberty is not thus to be put in trammels. The shackles are worse than Jewish that they would put on our feet, and then tell us to go over hill and dale and preach the Gospel to every creature.[14]

The Church cannot submit to it --- it wont submit to it; the Church must have freedom.... I will not submit. I wont be bound.... I will not submit.... I will not submit.... The Presbyterian Church will never submit.... No! No!... We cannot.... We cannot.... We cannot.... We cannot.... [W]e will not....

> The church has freedom of discretion in selecting her modes of her operation; and to sacrifice their freedom to the claims of a high jure divino churchism.., we cannot and will not consent.[15]

Hodge and his supporters meet the second foundation of Thornwell's argument squarely by asserting the usefulness and good of the Boards and ridiculing the idea that Thornwell's alternative (the Executive Committee) is in any practical way different from a Board or possessed of any better Scriptural warrant:

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[13]The same, p 371.
[14]The same.
[15]The same, pp 372-373.

> The Boards have been signally owned and blessed by the great head of the church, and made the means of incalculable good.[16]

> Hodge: [A]fter all, what does it amount to? to what, indeed, has it come, when, to our inexpressible relief, he tells us that it is all comprehended in the distinction between the Board of Missions and the Church Extension Committee? He thinks it a radical difference. I do not think it worth that. [Snapping his fingers.] If this were all, it would not be worth while to spend our time in the discussion.[17]

> The only difference between the Committee of Christian Extension and the Board of Missions is, that the one consists of some eighty or ninety members, the other of thirty or forty. To make this difference a matter of vital principle, a question of divine right, the dividing line between rebellion and obedience, is utterly unreasonable.[18]

3. It becomes clear that what Thornwell and his supporters are asking for in practical detail is

a) to get rid of the Board which, appointed by the General Assembly, in turn appoints the Executive Committee which actually conducts the work. They will accept an executive body immediately appointed by, reporting to, and responsible to, the Church court. They reject the interposition of a Board between such a body and the court:

> Adger: Reduce the Boards to an effective size, say seven, or eleven, or fifteen men, so that every meeting may be attended by all the members.[19]

> Smith: Let the Church act herself, directly,

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[16] Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, 33:3 July 1860, p 520.

[17] The Southern Presbyterian Review, XIII:2 1861, p 369.

[18] Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, 33:3 July 1860, p 519.

[19] The Southern Presbyterian Review, XIII:2 1861, p 378.

through these Committees, calling them Boards if you please, but making them a simple and real executive agency.[20]

-- and,

b) to get rid of the bought memberships:

Thornwell: Sir, it has been my lot to have part in many earnest debates in the Church Courts, and I do not know that I was ever yet betrayed into saying an unkind word of any man in the Church, or of any institution in the Church I was called on to oppose. But, sir, every instinct of my nature, and every holy impulse implanted within me by the Spirit of God, rises up with indignation and horror against this principle that men may buy places of honor and trust in this free, glorious commonwealth of Jesus Christ.

I do revolt against this paid membership --- this entitling of men for money to become consulting members of the Church or of her Boards (which they tell us are the same thing) -- this selling distinctions and honors in the Church of Christ, for filthy lucre, when nothing is plainer than that the love of Christ should form the only motive of all our contributions.

Whatever shall be the result of this discussion, Moderator, were it in my power I would at least expunge and utterly and for ever blot out this organic feature of our present system, as I hope God will wash out the sin and shame of it in the blood of His dear Son.[21]

4. Adger's analysis is correct, that the word "organic" in the pending question affected the commissioners. The house voted overwhelmingly not to make "organic" changes; but later, at the return of B. M. Smith's proposals to the floor in revised form, the Assembly proceeded to vote for changes which Thornwell and Adger and Smith would classify as organic. For this reason Thornwell entered a protest after the first vote, but withdrew it when the Assembly

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[20]The same, p 359.

[21]The same, pp 365-366. Paragraphing added.

later proceeded to take what he considered to be organic changes in the right direction.

5. In Thornwell's time, as in ours, there has always been a severe misunderstanding about the application of his limited and distinctive Presbyterian view of Presbyterian church government in a jus divinum light.

Other churches, such as the Episcopal or the Roman Catholic or the Southern Baptist or the Disciples or either branch of the group calling itself simply the Christian Church, hold their government not only to be that laid down by divine law, they hold that other church governments than theirs, not being in conformance with divine law, render the churches embracing them to be no true churches of Jesus Christ.

These exclusivist theories are well known, and as a result it is easy to assume that a Presbyterian who believes that Presbyterian church government follows the pattern laid down in scripture, and thus enjoys a divine right to validity, also holds non-Presbyterian churches to be no true churches. The assumption is as unwarranted as it is common, and Thornwell in the course of saying so during the Rochester debate reveals something to us about himself in passing: for all his devotion to the distinctive particulars of Presbyterian faith and Presbyterian order, James Henley Thornwell is generous and catholic in his refusal to exclude from the Christian fellowship those who embrace Christ and his Church on other than Presbyterian lines; and, which may be a surprise to those who know him only indirectly or by hearsay or by prejudice, he is equally generous and catholic even if their shortcomings as he sees them lie in their faith.

> It is said that thus I deny the right to any other denomination to call itself a Church of Christ[, Thornwell is careful to note. But I do not do anything of the sort, he says.] A Church may be a true Church though imperfect in its organization, as a man may be united to Christ by a saving faith, yet deny doctrines which I deem essential to the perfection of Christian character.[22]

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Having been spending our nights in "some comfortable rest" in the accommodations supplied Dr. and Mrs. Archer and us by Brother E. T. Cathey on Allen Street, we have been able to stay awake through the days; but the hour of adjournment, coming to us just in the nick of time from day to day in our debaters' continuing remarks, does not entirely offend us.

The truth is, while we were asleep in our strange beds at Cathey's we rested well, but his house is only a lot's width from the railroad, and is what will one day be thought of as only a football field's length from the depot. Sitting beside Dr. Archer as the first morning sessions began, we saw him entering into his diary some sentiments which have our entire sympathy.

> Was woke several times however by railroad trains leaving....There is a great deal of business on this road. The trains leaving & arriving 4 or 5 times a day. We witness some longer trains than I have ever seen before, we counted one having 80 cars & 3 locomotives.[23]
>
> Big trains; a big country. In the Assembly it had

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[22]The same, p 362. Italics and paragraphing added.

[23]Archer, Diary, p 68.

> Dr. Archer, as keen and as accurate an observer of the Assembly as he was of the people and places we saw with him as we made our way from Donalds to Rochester,

been big men, a collision of giants. Giants in the eyes of the church. Giants in public debate. Giants in our memories, giants in mind and heart.

Hodge, leaning on his cane; Thornwell once more -- down inside -- bleeding; and whenever either one walked away from that floor, it was from an awed and transfixed house.

Meeting head on in Rochester, they never met again.

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records Thornwell's opening speech as follows:

> Dr. Thornwell said diversity of opinion does & has a long time existed - as to the most effective
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> [Page 73]
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> organizations of the Boards. The friends of the present system not long since argued there was no difference worth contending for. Now they say the difference is vital - When considered nominal, they should have yielded for they knew we were conscientious. I do not deprecate the discussion. This question is an offshoot of another, the organization of the church itself. Some of us hold that God gave us our church government as truly as our doctrines. God revealed to us an order as well as a faith. Our attitude in the one case is to hear & believe. In the other, it is to hear & obey. One class says you may do what Scripture does not
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> [Page 74]
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> forbid, the other you may only do what Scriptures command. We contend as conscientiously for the great principles of Presbyterian order as for those of the faith allowed to it. The one says of the church its federative unity is one of them. Another is the representation principle by which any of us are here, all of us on precisely the same footing. I do not deny that other denominations may be churches of Christ though there may be imperfections. Adjourn till 9 a.m. tomorrow. (Archer, Diary, pp 72-74.)

EPILOGUE

## THE TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD

The war to suppress the southern rebellion broke up the Old School Presbyterian Church at her next General Assembly after Rochester, leaving Hodge's and Thornwell's after-debate in their Reviews to shift for themselves. The venerable Dr. Gardiner Spring, who was the leader in deprecating divisive debate at Rochester in 1860, became the leader at Philadelphia in 1861 of uniting the church behind the Union and acknowledging the sin of treason in all the church who would not give their allegiance to the Union's lawfully constituted power. If this meant the division of the church by the defection of traitors, so be it. And so it came to pass, and yet remains.

Robert Jefferson Breckinridge held Kentucky for Lincoln and the Union, and held Old School Presbyterian Kentucky for the loyal Old School Presbyterian Assembly. Stuart Robinson had to wait the war out in Canada, but by the close of the war the Old School Assembly would admit of reunion and communion with only such Presbyterians as confessed that their loyalty to supposedly sovereign states was in fact treason to the true sovereign, the Republic; and Stuart Robinson led the most part of the Synod of Kentucky out into independence, and later into the church of the secession, by then called no longer the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America but simply the Presbyterian

Church in the United States.

This left the northern wing of the Old School church impeccably loyal to the Union, but deprived it of that Virginia School and of that generally orthodox, nonlatitudinarian southern element which had tipped the scales against the New School in 1837-1838. Only four years of postwar existence in a state of telling the southern wing of the Old School that they could return only by burning a prominent red T into their foreheads was required to insure the permanent defection of the rebels -- and the immediate readmission of the New School rebels, now largely shut of their outright Congregationalists. Unfortunately the New School was by then also largely shut of evangelistic zeal; and shut of a growth rate even remotely close enough to the nation's growth rate (especially in the cities, the cities which were the wave of the future) to ensure that the Presbyterian Church would survive as more than an heirloom; and also shut of any overweening attachment to Presbyterian principles as such, whether in faith or order. Charles Hodge and Robert Jefferson Breckinridge were to find themselves baffled strangers in a world they had worked for and helped to make, but which had not turned out to be what they had expected.

The southern wing of the Old School Presbyterian Church organized itself promptly, even before 1861 was over, into the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. Thornwell, now dying, had left Rochester to make a second voyage abroad in search of life. He returned, unsuccessful, in time to travel once more the road to Augusta and to write there his church's greeting to All the Churches of Jesus Christ Throughout the Earth. This, in his own careful longhand and signed by every commissioner to that Assembly,

now hangs on the wall of an alcove at the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, surrounded by furniture from the study of his biographer, Benjamin Palmer, first Moderator of the new church.

At this opening Southern Presbyterian General Assembly, Thornwell introduced the motion which set up Southern Presbyterian mission administration on the lines of Benjamin Mosby Smith's reforming legislation introduced at the 1859 General Assembly in Indianapolis and enacted in part by the 1860 General Assembly in Rochester.

The governing body of the central mission agency would be called an Executive Committee; it would be elected directly by the Assembly in regularly rotating classes and would be responsible directly to the General Assembly with no intervening Board, that screen left over for so many years from the administrative pattern of the Volunteer Societies of Congregationalist affinities. It would submit its minutes and reports directly to the General Assembly.

Whether in accepting this arrangement in Rochester, and in moving its adoption in Augusta, Thornwell was abandoning his earlier more radical call to something more in the direction of Coit's program, or was simply accepting, as the reformers all along had accepted, any palliative move in the right direction which the church might be found ready to agree to, would be the subject of speculation and debate in a later generation which looked back to Thornwell as a founding father.

Both wings of the Presbyterian Church, northern and southern alike, were to find their benevolent machinery of Boards now taken into their bosoms, as independent, as inefficient and as overbearing as the Old School Presby-

terian reformers had found them to be and had said they would be by nature; and from time to time each wing would rouse itself to reorganize and reshuffle them.

But Thornwell's sun, as Palmer said, went down at noon when he died during the war at the age of 49, and no one has arisen since him to say with his forcefulness that the Board system itself is a deadly excrescence on the Presbyterian system of church government, which if not extirpated root and branch will of its own alien nature both control that government and destroy that church. For the Boards, the Old School Presbyterian reformers held, would in time blot out the insight of the great Reformation that small departures from the commandment and pattern of Scripture lead in time to a church untrue enough to have become a synagogue of Satan. They held that even sooner the Boards would wipe out all chance of the awakening of the whole of the church, in all her individual and organized capacity, to a revived and burning devotion to go into all the world; to preach the gospel to every creature; to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever the Lord has commanded.

## CONCLUSIONS

I. What happened?

A. In 1839 the Old School Presbyterian church was administering its mission work by a Board system patterned after that of the Voluntary societies.

B. Continuing Old School Presbyterian reformers following the lead of Robert Jefferson Breckinridge sought specific reform of the Presbyterian Board system as follows:

1. Substitution of systematic giving as a part of worship, to replace collection of funds by travelling Agents representing the Boards.

2. Reorganization of the Boards into small, manageable bodies, directly elected by the General Assembly, in rotating classes, and submitting their Minutes and Annual Reports directly to the General Assembly. This would replace large nominal bodies, consisting partly of persons elected by the General Assembly and partly of persons issued memberships in return for cash contributions, which large Boards in turn at sparsely attended meetings elected small Executive Committees which, reporting only to the Board, elected the Executive and supervised the work.

3. Relocation of the Board headquarters to scattered centers. This would replace the concentration of Boards in Philadelphia and New York.

4. Assigning General Assembly level responsibility to conduct Domestic missions for only that Domestic work lying in frontier areas or in Presbyteries so extremely weak as to be unable to do anything locally, and assigning the normal Presbyteries full responsibility to conduct and administer Domestic mission work within their respective bounds. This would replace the system of assigning to the Board of Domestic Missions responsibility for conducting and administering domestic mission work in all Presbyteries. In such normal Presbyteries the Board of Domestic Missions might make appropriation of funds to the Presbytery's work, and the Presbytery might send over-and-above funds to the Board.

C. James Henley Thornwell and John Calkins Coit sought further radical reform of the Board system as follows:

1. Complete abolition of the Boards at the General Assembly level. This would replace the central agency by an intensive, awakened missionary endeavor carried out by members, deacons, elders, pastors, sessions and presbyteries. For Thornwell, the formal organization of this work should be simply the existing Presbyterian organization. For Coit the formal description was similar, but excluded the possibility of Presbytery Boards and emphasized local enthusiasm and responsibility. Most administrative matters presently handled by the Boards would in Coit's program be handled by the missionaries themselves.

Thornwell's and Coit's program assumed, depended on, and was intended to encourage, continued thoroughgoing revival and awakening of the church.

2. Assignment of all fund handling and fund transmission to deacons or boards of deacons.

D. By 1854 the General Assembly committed itself to abandoning traveling Agents and to encouraging Systematic Benevolence as a regular part of worship.

E. By 1856 the General Assembly was experimenting with geographic decentralization of its Boards; from its beginning in 1861 the southern church put each Board in a different city.

F. In 1860 the General Assembly enacted substantial additional portions of the reformers' program for modification of the Board system.

G. The northern wing never got its Boards outside the two cities of Philadelphia and New York, and moved all to New York in the reorganization of the late 1960s. The southern wing followed suit in 1972 by moving its remaining Boards to Atlanta to join those already located there.

H. The northern church generally centralized its domestic mission work in the Board; the southern church generally decentralized it.

II. Who did it?

A. Six men called for and worked for these reforms. All were Southern; James Henley Thornwell succeeded Robert Jefferson Breckinridge as their leader; Benjamin Mosby Smith alone was active over the entire twenty years.

B. Most other prominent men, north and south, opposed the reforms, argued against them, and were only gradually outvoted after years of agitation. Thomas Smyth of Charleston and Walter Lowrie of Philadelphia led the first defense against reform. In later years other Board secretaries, and Chairmen, provided additional anti-reform leadership.

C. John Leighton Wilson blocked the overseas portion of John Calkins Coit's reform in Harmony Presbytery.

D. Charles Hodge of Princeton had assumed informal leadership of pro-Board forces by 1856, and led the floor defense of the status quo in the climactic Rochester Assembly of 1860.

III. Who was conservative? Who was liberal?

A. Smyth, Lowrie, Wilson, Gildersleeve, Musgrave, Boardman and Hodge all argued for the status quo in mission administration.

They were conservative across the board: no single modification of the Board system as inherited in 1838 was made except over their determined opposition. In some cases they blocked change permanently; in other cases they fought off change successfully, only to lose later.

Smyth and Hodge, the two literary spokesmen for the status quo, took clear-cut stands in writing against change as being inherently evil.

B. Breckinridge, B. M. Smith, Thornwell, Coit, Robinson and Adger all argued for constructive change in mission administration. Breckinridge in part, Thornwell beyond doubt, and Coit in detail, argued for radical change amounting to a fundamental reconstruction not merely of mission

administration, but of mission operations in their entirety.

IV. What are the greatest barriers to understanding the debate?

A. First, the modern definition of "Board," meaning governing body of an agency or institution, as contrasted with the "Board" of the Old School Presbyterian church, meaning a large, variously chosen, seldom convened and sparsely attended body, intermediate between the General Assembly and the actual governing body of the agency.

B. Second, the modern stereotype of southerners and Thornwell as conservatives or reactionaries, and the hidden corrollary that their opponents must by definition therefore be liberals or radicals.

C. Third, the effect which literary remains have on all minds in general, and on academically oriented minds in particular, to create an illusion to the effect that the literary and the academic were the major center of the lives of men who wrote.

D. Fourth, the contemporary identification of the debate with the name of James Henley Thornwell.

This has had a triple effect. It has imposed on modern perception of the debate all the effects of the received stereotyped conception of Thornwell; it has hidden from view the radical, activist nature of the debate; and it has masked the significant contributions to it made by a dozen other men.

As Thornwell's identification with the debate is real, separating him from the debate is impractical and would be misleading. The present study has devoted deliberate effort

to the task of recovering a truer picture of Thornwell, and from it pointing to a better understanding of the reformers' motives, goals, and program.

V. What new matter has this study brought to light?

A. The discovery of John Calkins Coit:

1. As a minister of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America who lived on into the period of the formation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States but who, infirm and dying during the war, had been overlooked in all editions of that church's Ministerial Directory, to which happily he has now been restored in the revision of 1975.

2. As a colleague and close associate of James Henley Thornwell in the movement for the reform of the administration of Presbyterian missions.

3. As the author of a complete program at the Presbytery level which throws light on Thornwell's failure to furnish one, and which indicates what Thornwell meant when he said that he was not worried about the details, confident that if the Presbyteries were enlisted in the work, they would have no difficulty in supplying them.

4. As a thoroughgoing ecclesiastical revolutionary and radical in the heart of South Carolina in the 1840s.

5. As the father of the successful re-establishment of Presbyterial home missions.

6. As a theologian whose searching, incisive positions on mission, church and ministry merit attention in an age adrift and looking for much-needed help in mission,

church and ministry.

Indeed, as Dr. Robert A. Archer said of our breakfast stop on the Weldon line, "we have seen worse doings."

B. The discovery of Robert Jefferson Breckinridge as the early (1839) founder of the move to reform the Presbyterian system of mission administration.

C. The discovery of the continuing role of Benjamin Mosby Smith in the reform.

D. The discovery of new material throwing light on Thornwell's enlistment in the movement for the reform of Old School Presbyterian mission administration.

E. The discovery of new material throwing light on Thornwell as a preacher.

VI. What new insights has this study yielded?

A. An understanding of the self-perception of the architects of the Old School reform of 1830-1838 as men leading a continuing re-formation of the church to New Testament patterns and principles, in the tradition of the great European, Scottish and Puritan reformations.

B. An understanding of the movement to change Presbyterian mission administration as a continuation of the more general Old School Presbyterian reform of 1830-1838.

C. An understanding of the relevance of the movement to reform Old School Presbyterian mission administration to continuing problems of the church in Mission.

D. An understanding that the twin wellsprings of the movement to reform Old School Presbyterian mission administra-

tion were a desire to hold as nearly as possible to New Testament givens in church government, and to revive and reawaken the entire church, individually and corporately, to a warm, active evangelical commitment and action.

E. An understanding of James Henley Thornwell as a man whose orientation was in many ways radically liberal rather than conservative, and whose core and center was poles removed from the academic.

F. An understanding of Charles Hodge in what for this investigator has proved to be a new and disturbing light.

Hodge, whose personal Christian devotion as preserved in that portion of his papers which rest in Speer Library at his Seminary is moving beyond words, and whose interests and influence were far wider than those we have dealt with in our study of what was for him a minor issue whose persistence he could not understand, comes through in our context in two unexpected, almost sinister, ways.

The first, surfacing once and then slipping quietly from view, neither developed further nor retracted, is his passage which in measured steps appears to question the General Assembly as the voice of the church; indicates that the mind of the church is often better and more clearly expressed in other ways; states that the judgment of the church is paramount as compared to the individual's judgment; and ends by suggesting that the efficient executive in the Board rooms, expressing the mind of the church, is the voice with which the individual has no moral right to disagree.

Hodge does not pull this all together into one coherent package, but he sets out the component parts in close juxtaposition; they are there. This group of ideas is fraught

with profound implications which cut deeply across the basic Presbyterian and Reformed concepts of God's sole lordship over the individual conscience, and man's fallen nature which makes collegiality of rule in the church a necessary defense against the executive -- the more efficient the executive, the more necessary the defense.

Incorporated consciously or unconsciously into Presbyterian thought, and intensely congenial to the Board system, in proportion to its spread and adoption this package of ideas cannot fail to do serious damage to the heart of the Presbyterian church.

The second is the documentation by Robinson and Adger of Hodge's rewriting history to suit a party line.

# THE CLASSIC

[A MEMORIAL TO
THE SYNOD OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND GEORGIA
ON THE SUBJECT OF ECCLESIASTICAL BOARDS
PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION TO THE SYNOD
BY J. H. THORNWELL
AUGUSTA, GEORGIA, NOVEMBER, 1840]

The policy, which has so extensively prevailed for the last half century, among all denominations of Christians, of conducting what are called benevolent enterprizes by the instrumentality of Boards, we are fully persuaded, has been adopted by the Presbyterian church in this country, without examination and without reflection.

Professing to be regulated in doctrine, discipline and order, by an exclusive regard for the Word of God, and a firm rejection of all human authority in matters of religious faith and practice, it is not a little remarkable that she should yet be so ready to fall in with the current of popular opinion on questions of such momentous importance as those connected with the work of missions foreign and domestic, and the business of training a rising ministry and providing for the diffusion and defence of the truths of the gospel.

In the very midst of her earnest efforts for reformation and for truth --- whilst contending against unscriptural doctrines and remonstrating against unscriptural abuses, she forgets her zeal for the Divine authority, and lends her sanction to a system of measures which certainly has no surer foundation than that of prescription, and that not even of an ancient date.

This singular inconsistency may be, at least, partially accounted for by the peculiar circumstances

in which the church found herself placed during her great and glorious contest.

All reformations are gradual. The evils of ancient abuses do not develop themselves at once. The light breaks in upon the mind slowly and feebly at first, like the first beams of morning, and like them, also waxes stronger and stronger, until all darkness is dissipated, and the hidden things of dishonesty are openly revealed.

Great principles are clearly apprehended and acknowledged before their application in all their bearings and to their full extent is distinctly perceived. Some prominent corruption arrests the attention, awakens inquiry, and leads the mind to a clear perception of the remedy in some great truth which had been overlooked or abandoned.

And it is not until the remedy has been successfully applied to the pressing evils which first excited the spirit of examination, that a larger application is perceived to be possible or felt to be desirable. Absorbed in one great subject of attention, the mind overlooks all smaller matters, or matters of less immediate urgency.

In our recent contest, one great principle for which the church was so zealously contending, was that of ecclesiastical responsibility.

The first enormous and commanding evil of the voluntary societies, which arrested attention and aroused opposition, was their absolute independence of the authority and jurisdiction of the church. For years, consequently, her efforts were directed to the single point that the church, as such, should have the control of all the spiritual enterprizes of Christian benevolence.

It was not a subject of discussion how the church most efficiently conduct these matters in her ecclesiastical capacity --- by common consent, it was admitted that societies or specific organizations for the purpose, were indispensable necessary --- and the church felt that she would gain her point and secure the desired oversight and control, by placing these societies or organizations under her own supervision.

It never occured to her to discuss the yet farther bearing of the great principle which she was laboring to carry out upon the actual organization of the Boards themselves.

It never occured to her to ask the question whether what she does by an organization unknown to her constitution is really any more done by her in her ecclesiastical capacity, than what she did by the voluntary societies.

In her anxiety to throw off an abuse of the former system, she overlooked the inherent evils of the system itself, and destroyed nothing but its voluntary character.

Her boards are only substitutes for the voluntary societies, and can no more justly be regarded as the church, than the Home Missionary Association or the American Education Society.

The principle is that these enterprizes must be carried on by the church as a visible, organized body --- the fact is, that they are conducted by institutions apointed by the church, and not by the church in her ecclesiastical capacity. The church pushed the application of her principle no farther than to the arresting of the operation of purely voluntary societies --- it was reserved for less troubled times to carry it out and put her and all her institutions upon the venerable platform of Christ and his apostles.

The time, we trust, has arrived; and we do humbly hope, that the next General Assembly, standing upon the same principles of ecclesiastical responsibility with its illustrious predecessors of 1837 and 1838, and having its attention confined to no single and absorbing evil, will take a wide and commanding view of the whole subject, and make all the changes which are necessary that our church, as such, and without the aid of substitutes and agents, may fulfil all the trust which God has committed to her.

We are fully satisfied that the system of Boards and permanent agencies falls very far short of the spirit of our constitution, and so far from being a blessing, will, in the end, prove a deplorable calam-

ity, unless speedily abandoned.

We do not object to this system on account of slight and accidental evils which wisdom and experience may remove without affecting the essential elements of the system itself. Such evils or rather abuses exist. They are to be found

(1) in those regulations by which honorary membership is purchased for money, an enormity similar to the sin of Simon Magus, for which he met the rebuke of the apostle;

(2) in their tendency to perpetuate themselves; and in the partial amount of real investigation to which their proceedings are ever subjected.

These are objections to the present plan on which our Boards are organized, but they lie not so much against the system itself as against partial and accidental abuses.

The objections which have influenced our minds are radical and fundamental. We believe that the system in its essential principles is

(1) directly subversive of the Constitution of our church,

(2) unknown to the Word of God, and

(3) unsupported by any arguments of expediency or necessity which can commend it to the understanding of a Christian man.

These positions we shall endeavor to establish in order.

First, I. Boards are directly subversive of the form of government embodied in the Constitution of our own church. They involve a pratical renunciation of Presbyterianism.

The essential features of our ecclesiastical polity are the parity of the clergy --- the office of Ruling Elder, and a series of church-courts, rising one above another, and cementing the whole

body together as one harmonious whole.

> That[, says Dr. Miller of Princeton,] is a Presbyterian church, in which
>
> (a) the Presbytery is the radical and leading judicatory; in which teaching and ruling Presbyters or Elders have committed to them the watch and care of the whole flock; in which all Ministers of the word and sacraments are equal;
>
> (b) in which Ruling Elders as the representatives of the people, form a part of all ecclesiastical assemblies, and partake, in all authoritative acts, equally with the Teaching Elders, and
>
> (c) in which, by a series of judicatories rising one above the other, each individual church is under the watch and care of its appropriate judicatory; and
>
> (d) the whole body, by a system of review and control, is bound together as one homogeneous community.
>
> Wherever this system is found in operation in the church of God, there is Presbyterianism.

The only permanent officers in the church of God, which our Constitution recognizes, are

(a) Bishops

(b) Elders

(c) Deacons

--- the only courts are

(a) Sessions

(b) Presbytery

(c) Synods

(d) the General Assembly.

These officers and these courts are treated in our Constitution as abundantly adequate to meet all the exigencies of the church, and to do all that God requires her to do in her ecclesiastical capacity.

We profess to trace this system to the Scriptures. We believe that it embodies the leading principles of church government established by the apostles of the Lord; and we cannot question its sufficiency without bringing a serious and blasphemous reproach upon the Spirit of inspiration.

Whatever, therefore, is not done by Elders and Ministers, assembled in some one of the courts above mentioned, is not done by them as Presbyterians. It is only in these courts that we recognize the church as an organized body. Here, and here alone, do we find Presbyterianism.

Now we maintain that the system of Boards gives us a set of officers and a set of ecclesiastical courts entirely different from those of our Consitution.

The Corresponding Secretary and the General Agent of these Boards are neither discharging the peculiar functions of Minister, Elder or Deacon. They certainly are not Pastors, and are just as far from being Evangelists. They do not claim to be ruling elders and much less would they submit to be called deacons in the sense of our book.

What, then, are they? Where are their mixed and heterogeneous functions recognized as devolving upon any single individual from the first to the last of our Constitution?

They combine into one discordant whole, some of the duties of every officer acknowledged in our system --- they are two-thirds deacons, one-sixth elder, and one-sixth preacher. The duties, and not the name, make the office --- you may call them ministers, and ordain them as such, but if they do not discharge constantly and faithfully the duties of Ministers, God assuredly does not regard them in that light, and man should not; and if the church has marked out a routine of service which our Consititution

and the Word of God do not sanction as binding upon any single individual, if she has created a new sphere of labor, and appointed men to fill it, she has been guilty of creating new offices and appointing new ecclesiastical officers.

The offices under these Boards are not temporary trusts -- they are a permanent vocation -- just as much as the pastoral office itself, and they who fill them, live of their employments just as much as ministers of Jesus live of the gospel. They are permanent officers in the church -- and they are as perfectly distinct from those of Deacon, Elder and Bishop, as these respectively are distinct from each other.

We have no objection to the name Corresponding Secretary, General Agent, or any other mere name; but we do insist upon it, that new offices are made by human authority in the church of God, in which various conflicting duties are brought together, and a discordant whole created, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay. The temporary business of a secretary of scribe in any public meeting we understand -- the temporary agency of a Pastor for a specific purpose we acknowledge to be Scriptural -- but the appointing of men to a permanent and standing vocation, in which it is impossible to be faithful in any of the standing offices of the church, we do not understand -- for we have not so learned Presbyterianism.

But we object still farther, that the Boards themselves are to all intents and purposes ecclesiastical courts, exercising a power and jurisdiction in the church of God in direct and unavoidable collision with the authority of the courts acknowledged by our standards.

It is a common but a very mistaken apprehension that Boards are merely committees, invested with no other power and acting upon no other principle.

Committees are usually appointed for one of two purposes, either to prepare and arrange business for the body which appoints them, or to execute some specific trust by the order and direction of the body to which it is responsible. Of the first kind,

are the committees of bills and overtures, and the judicial committee appointed by the Assembly at every meeting; and of the latter kind is a committee of Presbytery to install a Pastor, or to receive the testimonials of Ministers from other Presbyteries, labouring within its bounds.

It is clear that in neither of these views can any of the Boards of the church be regarded merely as committees. They neither prepare and digest business for the action of the Assembly -- for they do it themselves -- nor execute any specific trust according to the direction or command of the body which appoints them.

They are confidential agents -- acting upon their own suggestions and their own views of expediency and duty, without pretending to wait for positive orders from the General Assembly. They are clothed with plenary power to act and do as to them shall seem most advisable in all matters embraced in the general subject entrusted to their care.

This ample investiture of power renders them to all intents and purposes ecclesiastical courts. They exercise dominion in the Lord's house. To say that this is not their true character, because they are responsible to the General Assembly, would be to deny that the Presbytery is an ecclesiastical court, because it is responsible to the Synod, or to strip the Synod of its true character, because it in its turn, is amenable to the Assembly.

The possession and exercise of power, distinguish a court; and as these are found in the Boards by a most unwarrantable perversion of our Constitution, they are promoted to a level with Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods.

Here, then, we have a new system of ecclesiastical order.

In addition to Pastors, Elders, and Deacons, we behold General Agents, Corresponding Secretaries and Executive Committees[.]

[I]n addition to the ancient and established

judicatories of our church, we behold, as though Christ had left her inadequately furnished for her great work, a mighty system of Boards of equal authority and much wider operation; and already have these institutions become so intolerably arrogant in the exercise of their unlawful dominion, that they speak of the true judicatories of the church as their auxiliaries. They receive reports from Presbyteries and issue their directions, not in the spirit of a servant accounting to his master, but in the style of a feudal Lord to his humble and obedient vassals.

If, then, these institutions are new ecclesiastical courts composed of new ecclesiastical officers, they are not Presbyterian, because no provision is made for them in our Constitution. The rule is universal, that in all positive grants of power, no more can be claimed than is formally conveyed. A Constitution is a system of fundamental laws; whatever is not expressly stated or virtually implied, is understood to be denied.

But we maintain farther, that our Constitution contains acknowledgments of power as vested in our regular courts which is utterly inconsistent with the power vested by the Assembly in the Boards. We will take, for example, the Boards of Domestic and Foreign Missions. These institutions have the whole matter of preaching the gospel to the destitute and ignorant at home and abroad entrusted to their charge.

There are two great departments of the missionary work -- spiritual and temporal, and the provisions for each of these are made in our book[:]

(1) The power of ordaining the Evangelist belongs exclusively to Presbytery -- so does the oversight of him and his charge if he should succeed in gathering a people to the Lord from among the outcasts of ignorance and sin. To the Presbytery, according to our Constitution, and to that alone, he is immediately responsible. To it he must give an account of his labours; from it he must seek counsel and direction; and in conformity with its requirements he is expected to walk.

But with the single exception of the power of ordaining and of instituting actual process for crime or heresy, the entire supervision of missionaries and

their work is committed to the Boards -- in other words, the power and jurisdiction granted by the Constitution to the Presbyteries are vested by the Assembly in its own creatures.

Compare the following grant of power to the Board of Foreign Missions in the 4th article of its Constitution: "To the Executive Committee, &c., shall belong the duty of appointing all Missionaries and Agents -- of designating their fields of labour -- to authorize all appropriations and expenditures of money and to take the particular direction and management of the Foreign Missionary work subject to the revision and control of the Board of Directors." Here is unquestionably the power of judging of the qualifications of Ministers -- their fitness for particular stations, and here is a right conveyed to control and manage and direct their labors.

Turn, now, to the Constitution of the church: in chapter 10, section 8, of the Form of Government it is written, "the Presbytery has power to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry -- to ordain, install, remove and judge Ministers." Here the same powers, in part, are evidently granted to two different bodies -- in the one case, they are granted by the Constitution, in the other by the Assembly.

The Assembly, unquestionably had no right to take from the Presbytery its constitutional authority, and to vest it in any other organization. It has no right to set aside the Constitution for any purpose whatever. The absurdity and confusion of vesting the same powers in different bodies, are not likely to be felt except in cases of collision. If the Board should determine to send out a man as an evangelist, whom the Presbytery pronounced to be utterly unfit for the work, the Board might do it, and leave the Presbytery to lament the existence of a worm slowly eating out the very vitals of Presbyterianism. -

- And in the same way the power which is delegated to the Board of Education interferes with the exclusive right of Presbytery to receive candidates for the holy ministry, and to regulate their studies during the period of their trials.

The Boards introduce a plan of action and a system of operations which our fathers never contemplated[,] since they have made the most abundant provisions for doing successfully and by the regular process of our courts, every thing connected with the real interests of the church which these recent and anomalous institutions undertake to accomplish.

It is plain that under the present system so far is Presbytery from being the radical and leading court, which in all Presbyterian churches according to Dr. Miller it is, the Boards themselves are all and all, and the poor Presbyteries are dwindled down into mere auxiliaries -- into hewers of wood and drawers of water.

The other department of duty connected with the Missionary work, respects

(2) the making of adequate provisions for the temporal support of the Evangelists and their families. For this business it is supposed that the Presbyteries are wholly unqualified. It has been frequently admitted that while everything connected with the spiritual aspects of Domestic and Foreign Missions falls appropriately within the province of the Presbytery, there is no adequate arrangement in our book for conducting the pecuniary matters of the various stations with efficiency and success.

This[,] we apprehend, is a great mistake.

1. In the first place, the Constitution expressly provides that the Judicatory sending out any Missionary, must support him -- (Form of Government, chap. 18.)

2. In the second place, the book provides that our churches should be furnished with a class of officers for the express purpose of attending to the temporal matters of the church, and these Deacons might be made the collecting agents of the Presbytery in every congregation and through them the necessary funds could be easily obtained and without expense.

3. For transmission to foreign parts, nothing more would be necessary than simply to employ some extensive merchant in any of our large cities, who

for the usual per-centage would attend to the whole matter, or a Committee of Deacons appointed by the Assembly for the purpose.

So far, then, as the collection and disbursement of funds are concerned, our Constitution has made the most abundant provisions.

We know of nothing that more strikingly illustrates the practical wisdom of the Divine provision of Deacons as collecting agents in each congregation, than the fact, that after long and mature experience, the American Board has recommended the appointment of similar Agents in each congregation contributing to its funds as the most successful method of increasing its resources.

Our book, however, does not confine Deacons to particular congregations. There should be a competent number of them in each particular church, but we insist upon it, that Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly should also have the Deacons to attend to their pecuniary matters. Those ordained at Jerusalem were not confined to a specific congregation, but acted for the whole College of Apostles. By entrusting all pecuniary matters into the hands of men ordained under solemn sanctions for the purpose, our spiritual courts would soon cease to be, what they are to an alarming extent, at present, mere corporations for secular business.

<u>If all our Boards were converted into mere benches of Deacons</u>, commissioned only to disburse funds under the direction of the spiritual courts, <u>there would be no serious ground of objection to them</u>; but <u>in their present form they are lords and masters of the whole church</u>.

They are virtually the head of the church -- their will is law -- their authority irresistible; and they combine what God has separated, the <u>purse</u> and the <u>keys</u>.

If the foregoing remarks are well founded, and the whole power which is now lodged in the Boards in reference to every department of their work, whether spiritual or temporal, belongs constitution-

ally to other bodies, the argument is unanswerable, that these Boards are subversive of Presbyterianism.

It is vain to urge that our fathers never contemplated the extended scale of benevolent operations which God, in his providence[,] has enabled us to carry forward.

(1) They were men deeply imbued with the Spirit of all grace;

(2) [T]hey understood well, for they had faithfully studied the appropriate functions of the church;

(3) [T]hey had looked narrowly and closely into the nature, arrangement and powers of the system of ecclesiastical action which Christ and his Apostles had established;

(4) [T]hey felt it to be adequate to all the exigencies of any age or any part of the world, and

(5) [I]n the fear of God they endeavoured to construct all things according to the pattern shown to them in the mount.

We, however, in the fulness of our wisdom and the enlargement of our views, have constructed a different system; and the question is now forced upon all sound and conscientious Presbyterians, whether they will abide by their ancient, venerable and Scriptural standards, or swear allegiance to the new order of things which has imperceptibly grown up and stealthily stolen upon us.

Independently of the facts that the Boards are ecclesiastical courts, possessing, to a considerable extent, co-ordinate jurisdiction with the Presbyteries themselves, their unconstitutionality will farther appear from the tendency of their practical working to introduce a system of virtual prelacy.

The parity of the clergy is a fundamental principle among all Presbyterians.

Whatever differences superior piety, learning and talents may make in the man, we allow no differ-

ence in the office.

We tolerate no official authority in one minister above another.

Our system does not admit it.

But the fact is unquestionable that the various officers of our Boards are invested with a control over their brethren, and a power in the church, just as real and just as dangerous as the authority of a Bishop. They constitute a college of ecclesiastical functionaries who determine the character and shape the destinies of the Presbyterian church in these United States of America.

Ministers receive commissions from them, and upon them are dependent for their daily bread, and no slavery is more abject than that which grows out of a hopeless dependence upon others for the necessaries and comforts of life. This tie will bind to obedience much more firmly in ordinary cases than the ordination vow of the humble priest, to reverence and obey his superior lord.

We will dare adventure the assertion that there is not a Presbytery in the land, which possesses the real power, and which can exercise it so speedily and efficiently as the Corresponding Secretaries and Executive Committees of our different boards. In 1837, we rebuked the operations of the Home Missionary and American Education Societies, not only on account of their irresponsible character, but also on account of the enormous power which they were able to wield against us. And, what less power do our own institutions possess? Are they any thing more than substitutes for the voluntary societies possessing the same inherent elements of mischief and disorder if they should ever fall into the hands of bad men?

The following remarks, in confirmation of our own views, we quote from a source entitled to much consideration:

> Our experience teaches us, as reason also shows, that the great effect of these boards is to cast all power into a few central hands, and

render them as independent as possible of the action of the Assembly. The notion of any responsibility in these boards is a mere figment. Two or three persons control the proceedings of the Executive Committee: and then when the Board comes to review their doings; they have become the doings of the Committee, and have the weight of that whole body: and for this reason should be as they argue, and are generally confirmed by the Board; then the same doings are for a like reason, approved in the Assembly: and the church, having Committee, Board and Assembly to vouch, of course, approve; but remotely, A and B, after all, did the thing, and there never was any just or real supervision of their action. These boards with other nominal ecclesiastical operations are all so located and filled, that, in truth, the Presbyterian church is managed, through these contrivances, by about two or three dozen persons, in all its great practical operations.

Their efficient managers are as absolute a hierarchy as exists upon the face of the earth; and if they are the best hierarchy of all -- nay even a Presbyterian hierarchy -- still let its true nature be distinctly seen and known. --

There are, in effect, residing in Philadelphia, about one dozen persons, ministers and laymen who are the real Board of Missions, Board of Publication and Board of Education; and who have the official power to be largely all the rest if they please.

Well and forcibly does the writer add:

Now, is there a man in the whole church who would be content to admit such a result, if it were nakedly propounded? Not one. But interpose a variety of contrivances called Boards, Committes, and what not, and then the whole church very calmly submits to it; though really the result is nearly the same.

Is there a man in the church who believes that any four or five ministers in Philadelphia are at all superior to four or five hundred of

> their brethren -- much less so much so as to justify such a result even if it were otherwise Scriptural, constitutional, profitable, modest or Presbyterial? Not one.

And from the very nature of the case, this undue accumulation of power in a few hands, must always be the practical result of this system.

This single fact shows that it is rotten to the core and utterly alien from all our habits, feelings and associations as Presbyterians.

The machinery which no human wisdom can put in operation without destroying the official equality of the clergy -- which always and inevitably works a few men to the uppermost seats in the synagogue, may answer for Papists and prelatists, but it is death to Presbyterianism.

His holiness the pope, may in consistency with his ecclesiastical principles encourage the propaganda as a prodigious engine for the accumulation of all power, but Presbyterians renounce their creed and deny their polity when they lend their sanction to any institutions, even remotely modelled after such instruments of ecclesiastical despotism.

Under this general head of the anti-Presbyterian character of the Boards, we will suggest another consideration which has commended itself very forcibly to our minds.

It appears to us that this whole system involves an abandonment of the great principle that it is the duty of the church, as such, in her ecclesiastical capacity, to conduct every department of the work which the Saviour has committed to her.

To this principle the Presbyterian church is pledged -- for this principle she earnestly contended through years of darkness, anxiety and apprehension.

In this contest we participated heartily and warmly according to the measure of grace which was given us, and we can see no reason for abandoning it

when victory is now within our reach.

> We believe, said the Assembly of 1837, in her circular letter to all sister churches -- that if there be any departments of Christian effort to which the church of Christ is bound, in her appropriate character, to direct her attention and her unwearied labours, they are those which relate to the training of her sons for the holy ministry, and sending the gospel to those who have it not, and planting churches in the dark and destitute portions of the earth.

Here the obligation of the church in her "appropriate character" is distinctly admitted and given as one reason for rebuking the various voluntary associations which, without any warrant from God, had taken these matters into their own hands.

The question now arises whether what is done by boards is really done by <u>the church as such, "in her appropriate character</u>," or as Dr. Miller expresses it, in her "ecclesiastical capacity?"

<u>Are the Boards, in other words, the church</u>?

Have they been constituted its authorized rulers by its glorious Head?

Do they pretend to exercise dominion in the Lord's house, by a Divine warrant?

Are they Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods or Assemblies -- the only courts, according to our Constitution, in which we find the church as a visible organization or in her appropriate character or ecclesiastical capacity!

Unquestionably not.

Then to act by or through them, is not to act in our ecclesiastical capacity. It is to renounce the principle for which we have struggled for years just at the moment when complete and glorious victory was within our reach.

<u>The Boards are agents, confidential agents for</u>

the church, but they are not the church herself. They are no more the church than the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was when the Assembly recommended it to general confidence, and employed it as the medium of its own Foreign Missionary transactions. The only difference in the two cases is the difference between consent and appointment: She consented to delegate her duties in the one case to an existing institution, and in the other she creates and delegates by the same act. The one is made to her hands and she consents to the exercise of a certain trust by it -- the other she makes herself; but the real and only important question is, not who made the institutions, but what are they after they are made?

And if they are not the church in her appropriate character or ecclesiastical capacity, the plighted faith of the Assembly requires it to abandon them: that faith is pledged that the church shall attend to these things and entrust it to no foreign hands.

It is vain to reply that the transactions of our boards are really the doings of the church in her appropriate character, because in her ecclesiastical capacity and by her highest judicatory she actually created them, and they act only by the authority which they received from her; so that the power of the Boards is the power of the church turned into a particular channel by her own act. This reasoning establishes nothing more than the confidential agency of the Boards, but does not identify them with our acknowledged ecclesiastical courts any more than a power of attorney identifies the agent with his principal. The church puts the work out of her own hands under such circumstances, that she can recall it at any moment or superintend to a certain extent the operations of her agents -- but still it is these agents who do it in her name and not she herself; and her favourite principle is as completely abandoned as if she had left the whole matter in the hands of the voluntary socieites.

But we maintain still farther, that if that sort of unity which an agency implies could establish the identity of the Boards with the church in her appropriate character or ecclesiastical capacity, she has no

right to entrust her own peculiar functions to any agent, no matter how closely connected with herself.

The duties of the church are duties which rest upon her by the authority of God. He has given her the organization which she possesses -- for the purpose of discharging these duties. She can, therefore, no more throw them off upon others, than a man can delegate to his neighbor the care of his own family and abandon himself to idleness and ease.

If our form of church government is such as God prescribed, it is adequate for all emergencies -- if our church courts are based upon the platform of the Bible, God requires from them the discharge of their peculiar duties, and not from another. He appointed them for this very purpose, and gave them no authority to shift the responsibility, the heat and burden of the day upon creatures of their own.

If the church can delegate one part of her work, she can delegate another. Presbyteries might form boards to receive, license, ordain, install and remove ministers, and it would be as much done by the church in her ecclesiastical capacity as the work of missions and education as now conducted.

We can see no conceivable difference in principle between the right to settle Evangelists in foreign lands, or to prescribe their fields of labour, and the right to settle Pastors at home, and if the one can be entrusted to the care of a Board, the other may be also. But if, as it will perhaps be universally conceded, a Presbytery cannot delegate the power of receiving calls to any other body -- no more can it renounce the equally important functions growing out of its relations to the Evangelists connected with it.

The general introduction of the principle of delegating the power of ecclesiastical courts to any other body whatever, would produce nothing but confusion, mis-rule and mischief; and a principle which cannot be carried out in all its legitimate applications without an entire subversion of all the distinctive features of our ecclesiastical polity, is evidently foreign to our institutions and wholly un-

Presbyterian: and yet upon this principle is founded the strange delusion that what we are doing by our Boards we are doing as a church, in our "appropriate character," or in our "ecclesiastical capacity."

We are aware that it may be said that this reasoning proves too much -- that it takes away from any ecclesiastical body the power to appoint committees for digesting business or executing a particular trust as well as the power to organize boards. But the two cases are widely different. A committee even when acting in the name of the body that appoints it, acts by particular direction; the body first determines what is to be done, and the committee is nothing but the instrument of execution. The planning, devising and deciding upon the matter, are not in its hands. It possesses no discretion -- it is like the tool in the hands of the carpenter, or a pen in the hands of a scribe. Power is not so much delegated to it as wielded through it by its original possessor.

But in the case of Boards, the power is given into their hands -- they consult, deliberate and act according to their own wisdom -- they possess as truly a real jurisdiction as the Presbyteries themselves, and all this they have received as a trust. Here, then, for the purposes specified in their constitution, the power passes from the body appointing them to the bodies appointed. The Boards are not the instruments by which the Assembly acts according to its views of duty and necessity, but they stand in the place of the Assembly, and wield its powers in their given fields of operation.

The difference, then, between executive committees and boards is just the difference between an instrument and an agent -- between acting in a particular way and having another to act for you. In the one case the church does act and in the other she surrenders her power of action; and it is against this delegation of the authority which she derived from her Head for specific purposes, that we feel ourselves bound most solemnly to protest as fraught with nothing but mischief and disorder.

We insist upon it, that the church has no right to retire from the work of the Lord, and folding her

arms in dignity and ease, commission others to do for her what Christ commanded her to do for him. Her instructions are not to see that the work is done, but to do it herself, and she is faithless to her Lord, to her high and solemn obligations, and to a dying world, if she gird not up her loins and buckle on her harness and give herself to active service in the field of the Lord of lords.

[Second, then:] II. The argument from the Scriptures against the system of Boards is of course, a very short one to all those who sincerely receive and adopt our standards. If our model of church government is according to the pattern revealed in the mount, whatever in subversive of its fundamental principles must necessarily be unscriptural and destitute of all Divine authority.

The great object of a visible church organization or definite system of church government is to put the church in a situation and provide her with all the necessary furniture of officers and means for building up the kingdom of God and extending its conquests throughout the world. When our adorable Redeemer ascended up on high, "he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." As under the old dispensation nothing connected with the worship or discipline of the church of God was left to the wisdom or discretion of man, but every thing was accurately prescribed by the authority of God, so under the new, no voice is to be heard in the household of faith but the voice of the Son of God.

The power of the church is purely ministerial and declarative. She is only to hold forth the doctrine, enforce the laws, and execute the government which Christ has given her.

She is to add nothing of her own and to subtract nothing from what her Lord has established.

Discretionary power she does not possess.

Christianity in its living principles and its

outward forms is purely a matter of Divine revelation. The great error of the church in all ages, the fruitful source of her apostacy and crime, has been a presumptuous reliance upon her own understanding. Her own inventions have seduced her from her loyalty to God and filled her sanctuary with idols, and the hearts of her children with vain imaginations. The Bible cuts at the very root of this evil by affording us a perfect and infallible rule of faith and practice.

The absolute perfection of the Scriptures as a directory to man was a cardinal principle of the reformation, and whatever could not be traced to them either directly or by necessary inference was denounced as a human invention -- as mere will-worship which God abhors so deeply that an inspired apostle has connected it with idolatry or the worshipping of angels.

Now the total silence of the Word of God in regard to such contrivances as Boards seals their condemnation. Nay, they are virtually prohibited by those plain directions of the Scriptures in regard to church government which lead directly to a different system.

But, however this may be, it certainly devolves on those who maintain and uphold them to produce the warrant by which they have been formed. No system of measures so important in its results, so solemn in its bearings upon the kingdom of Christ, should be adopted by any denomination of Christians, without the clear and unambiguous sanction of Him who alone is King upon the holy hill of Zion.

To our minds it is clear that our Saviour constituted his church with a special reference to Missionary operations, and we shall be slow to believe that the most successful method of conducting them was never discovered until eighteen centuries after his ascension.

The only plausible pretext by which a Scriptural sanction can be pleaded for such institutions, proceeds upon the supposition of a defect in the constitution of the church. It takes for granted that our regular ecclesiastical courts are inadequate for the

work, and then upon the general principle that where duties are clearly imposed, the necessary means of compliance are implied, the church bases the right of resorting to such inventions as shall enable her to obey the commandments of God.

But before this reasoning can be allowed, the inadequacy of our ecclesiastical constitution should be fully established, and then instead of patching up its defects, our proper course would be to abolish our whole system, and to seek for one which was adapted to our duties and responsibilities. The argument would prove, not that the church possessed a purely legislative power, but that in the first instance she had exercised her declarative power very badly, and had set forth a constitution in the name of the Lord, which, in its fundamental defects, carried along with it, a shocking impeachment of his wisdom.

In other words, <u>if Presbyterianism is total failure, our proper plan is not to bolster a rotten system, but to re-examine the Word of God, correct our mistake, and adopt that plan, whatever it was, which in the hands of the Apostles was eminently successful</u>.

There is another line of argument by which the unscriptural character of these Boards can be fully made out. The foundation on which the church rests her authority for engaging in the work of missions, is the Saviour's command to preach the Gospel to every creature.

It is obvious that whatever system of arrangements for accomplishing this purpose, may be adopted, it should give the fullest security that the contributions of the church go to support nothing but the Gospel.

The people should know the character and sentiments of the Missionaries sustained by their liberality. Otherwise they are not complying with the Saviour's command. But what security do the Boards give? None but the endorsement of the Presbytery or Presbyteries that ordained the Evangelists. The Assembly has virtually declared this to be no security,

by requiring every Presbytery to examine Ministers from any other Presbytery coming within its bounds. We do not allow men to preach at home without a better security than we require from them by the present system, when we send them abroad. We therefore leave our churches in fearful uncertainty as to what they are actually sending to heathen lands in the name of the gospel.

It would be well for the church if all her benevolent arrangements were as happily framed for the preservation of truth as they are for the raising and disbursing of money. To maintain, defend and propagate the truth, is unquestionably her great business, and money is valuable only so far as it can be rendered subservient to this high purpose. It should never be made the end of any system of ecclesiastical action. Nothing but a criminal indifference to the purity of the gospel could ever have reconciled the church to a plan of operations in which there was not afforded the strongest evidence that the nature of the case would admit, that the "word of the truth of the gospel," and that only was encouraged at home and spread abroad into foreign lands.

Those who contribute to our boards, do not know and cannot know whether they are sustaining Arminians, Semi-Pelagians or Presbyterians. They do not know, in other words, whether they are building up or pulling down the kingdom of the Redeemer -- whether they are obeying a Divine command, or whether they are not.

It is idle to say that we must have confidence in all our Presbyteries -- the experience of the past teaches us too plainly that we should have no confidence in the flesh, and that Presbyteries are sometimes as mischievous as any other bodies. This difficulty would be obviated by carrying out the provisions of our book. The Presbytery that sends a man would know him -- the churches within its bounds would know him -- and consequently would know what they were supporting. If the Presbytery that sends him should be unable to support him, it can call upon a neighboring Presbytery to which it is perfectly well known, for assistance; and that Presbytery would have full security from its position for the soundness of the man whom it was called on to assist.

Such is the spirit of the provisions in the 18th chapter of our Form of Government. The funds thus raised could either be transmitted by mercantile agents of the Presbytery, or by a central Committee of the Assembly, consisting of business men charged only with executive duties, and not entrusted with discretionary power.

[Third:] III. We pass now, in the last place, to consider those motives of expedience and necessity by which Boards and permanent agencies have been commended by their friends, and even by the highest court of the church itself. And at the very outset of our remarks upon this head, we would utterly protest against the principle that expediency is any measure of duty or obligation in the church of God. We acknowledge no laws but the Divine will, and we acknowledge no successful method of ascertaining the will of God, but His own written revelation which we believe to be perfect and adapted as well as designed to furnish the man of God thoroughly for every good work. We can cordially adopt the language of the immortal Calvin, when speaking of the Divine Word, for it is the language of truth and soberness: "Ab se, si deflictimus, ut nuper dixi, quam libet strenuo enitamur celeritate, quia tamen extra viam cursus erit, nunquam ab metan pertingere continget. Sic enim cogitandum est fulgorem Divini vultus, quem et apostolus inaccessum vocat, esse nobis instar inexplicabilis labyrinthi, nisi verbi linea in ipsum dirigamur, ut satius sit in hac via claudicare, quam extra eam celerrime currer."

The position that expediency is an adequate guide in any department of religious duty, proceeds upon a principle having a much closer affinity to the atheistic philosophy of Epicurus, especially as developed in modern times, than to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of God uniformly represents man as blind and ignorant, incapable of seeing afar off, perverted in his judgment, warped in his understanding, seared in his conscience, and mis-guided in his affections; and therefore requiring a heavenly teacher and a heavenly guide at every step of his progress. He has no light in himself in reference to Divine things.

He is a child, a fool to be taught and led.

Utterly unqualified by the narrowness of his faculties to foresee the future, he cannot tell even what is good for himself all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow, and much less can he determine upon a large scale what is expedient for the church of God. Surrounded by his natural darkness, he has a light, most graciously bestowed, which penetrates its gloom -- even the sure word of prophecy, and to this he is required to give heed.

No more uncertain and fluctuating guide can be followed than calculations of expediency depending upon contingencies which no man can foresee, distorted by the conflicting interests of society, and shaped by the visionary impulses of imagination, or the selfish purposes of pride and ambition. If the test of expediency can be introduced in one case, it may in another; and it would be impossible to set limits to the confusion and disorder growing out of the manifold inventions in which it would be found most fearfully prolific. To remove a single chink from the obstructions which bank up a mighty body of waters, is to prepare the way for the desolations of a flood.

The only safe principle is the noble principle of Chillingworth, <u>the Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants</u>. When this great sun arises, all meaner lights retire as the stars disappear before the dawning day.

<u>If, then Boards are unscriptural, Christians cannot entertain the question whether they are expedient or not -- their doom is sealed</u>.

And here we might safely rest the matter. But as in some minds there is a mystic spell by which they are strangely tied to these inventions of the flesh, as Solomon himself was marvellously led away by the splendid idolatry of the groves, we shall endeavour to show that even in the estimate of a carnal policy the ordinary pleas of expediency or necessity by which they are recommended, are utterly worthless.

1. And, first, they are wholly unnecessary. All that they do is to diminish the sense of responsibility in the real agents by interposing a medium between them and the body to which they must account. The Executive Committees, in point of act, do the business of the Boards: and it would certainly be wiser to connect them immediately with the Assembly, than to construct a circuitous route by which their transactions shall come to its knowledge.

Boards occupy the same position to our church which voluntary societies occupy in relation to the Christian community in general. But the same necessity which led to the formation of the latter does not exist to justify the continuance of the former. When the spirit of active benevolence and enlarged operation began to be aroused about the close of the last century, those who felt most warmly interested organized themselves into societies for the purpose of enlisting a more powerful and extended co-operation in their schemes of philanthropy and piety. Each member of these societies became a centre of influence in his own community -- the warm and zealous advocate of its claims, through whose diligence and industry the slumbering energies of the church were waked up, and the means acquired of successful and animating action. But it is very certain that the Boards are wholly unnecessary for this purpose among Presbyterians.

If our churches are asleep, there is a shorter, simpler, safer method of breaking up their slumbers. Let the provisions of our Constitution be carried out in their true spirit, and we need no other centre of influence -- no other advocate of philanthropy and duty in any community, than the faithful pastors in our numerous and growing congregations.

Upon any view of the subject which we have been able to take, the Boards strike us as a mere incumbrance. If the present central plan of operations must be continued, abolish the larger body and make the smaller directly responsible to the Assembly. The larger body, the Board, is only in the way -- a sort of shelter to the smaller -- the Executive Committee -- a wall between it and the General Assembly. As to any counsel and advice which the Boards might

give, we presume that the wisdom of the Assembly is abundantly adequate to prescribe any directions to its standing committees which they might require or be disposed to ask.

2. The plea, that these institutions concentrate the energies and resources of the church -- that they diffuse information in regard to the necessities of a dying world, and the efforts of the church to relieve them[,] is to our minds exceedingly futile. If by the energies of the church is meant its money, we think that this is very far from being a recommendation -- but if its prayers and graces and zeal are intended, we cannot conceive how they are concentrated. We cannot understand how God's people are made to take a livelier interest in His work when carried on by foreign hands, than when conducted by institutions of his own appointment. The convenience of foreign transmissions is the only plausible pretext, and surely the Boards, as such, afford no sort of assistance in this matter. The diffusion of information through the whole church, would be as certain and as expeditious through the one channel as the other.

It has been said, and gravely said, that without some central organization, our evangelists not knowing the efforts of the church, might, many of them, be found together in the same field.

(1) In the first place, such ignorance would disgrace an educated gentleman, much more a minister of the gospel; and

(2) in the second place, it assumes that these missionaries seek their fields of labour without consulting the special guidance of the Holy Ghost.

It is his province to allot men to their different stations as well as to crown their efforts with the desired success; and if at his call, a thousand evangelists should be found upon the same heathen shore, it would be only a token for good.

Our own impression is, that on the score of diffusing religious intelligence among all classes of our church members, a special organization is not so efficient as the regular action of our church courts

promises to be. If these benevolent operations were treated by the Presbyteries as a part of their ordinary ecclesiastical business -- if the communications of their ministers from abroad, were read and discussed as the documents sent from the churches at home usually are, and the necessities which they disclose of a dying world, made the subjects of special consideration and earnest prayer, the effect upon the church at large, would be incalculably greater than under the existing arrangement in which these things pass in the solemn conclave of a chosen few, and are known no farther than the circulation of a meagre, monthly periodical can make them known.

3. But the great plea which is urged for these institutions is, that without them in the present state of Christian feeling, nothing would be done. No one would put the shoulder to the wheel. If we understand the force of this plea -- it recommends the Boards and a system of permanent agencies as an excellent substitute for vital godliness in the churches.

Surely if our ministers and congregations were what they should be, something would be done. They would count it all joy to engage in the work of the Lord according to his own appointment.

If the spirit of love and zeal does not exist among us, it is vain to offer unto the Lord any other oblation.

He will not accept a substitute for the heart.

He will pour contempt upon our most splendid enterprizes, and blast with the breath of his mouth our most imposing organizations.

The church, the whole church -- all the living members of the Redeemer's mystical body, must be awake and active in his service -- each in his own particular province; and if our congregations are now asleep, our first step should be to peal the trumpet in their ears, to break their carnal slumbers, and to tell them, in the name of God, that the Master has need of them. Let us take and propose no substi-

tutes for vital piety and active godliness. Substitutes will only increase and perpetuate the evil.

But let us lay the axe at the root of the evil -- begin reformation at the right point, and God will smile upon us and bless us.

Let the provisions of our system be carried out and sustained in their true spirit, by every Session, every Presbytery, every Synod, and the General Assembly -- let a healthful circulation be diffused through all the veins of the Presbyterian body -- let the spirit of primitive Christianity pervade and animate the whole mass -- then will the righteousness of Zion go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth -- then she will lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes and enlarge the borders of her tent -- then she will feel herself fully equipped by her great commander, for all the battles of her glorious warfare, and in the joy and strength of her revival it will be [a] matter of astonishment and shame that she ever went down into Egypt for help, or called in the carnal principles of the world to fit her for her contests with the powers of darkness.

In conclusion, all that we ask is Presbyterianism -- simple, pure, unadulterated Presbyterianism -- the regular, uniform, healthful action of our noble system.

We oppose no good work -- but we cannot go out against the foe unless the Lord go with us, and we can have no reason to expect his assistance when we have trampled his institutions in the dust.

When the law goes forth, it must go forth from Zion -- and because we have told her towers, and marked her bulwarks, and considered her palaces, and have been fully assured that she is the city of the Lord of hosts, the city of our God, we are resolved neither to rest nor to hold our peace till out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.[1]

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[1]The text of the Memorial as presented above is taken from [James Henley Thornwell,] "A Calm Discussion of

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the Lawfulness, Scripturalness, and Expediency of Ecclesiastical Boards," as printed in The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine, VII:4, April 1841, pp 145-162, now quite rare. Additional paragraphing, subnumbering and underlining added; modern indentation and quotation format supplied; Armenian silently corrected to Thornwell's undoubted original Arminian.

The unidentified quotation in the text will be recognized by the reader as drawn from [Robert J. Breckinridge,] "Considerations on Reports of the Ecclesiastical Boards of the Presbyterian Church," in The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine, VI:10, October 1840, pp 448-450. The writer has not found the original manuscript of the Memorial.

Thornwell in sending it to Breckinridge says that he would appreciate having it back because he has no other copy of his own. He apologizes for its rough condition and authorizes Breckinridge to make any changes Breckinridge may think wise. (J[ames] H[enley] Thornwell to Robert Jefferson Breckinridge in Baltimore, from Columbia[, South Carolina], January 27, 1841, as printed in Palmer, Life of Thornwell, p 223.)

# SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following Selected Bibliography is divided into four main headings: Primary Sources; Reference Works; Bibliographies and Indexes; and Secondary Sources; with further subdivisions as needed.

In it the reader should find listed all works cited or quoted in this dissertation, together with those works consulted or used in the preparation of this dissertation and adjudged to be useful or interesting to those who may wish to explore further in this or related areas.

In addition, the section on Minutes exhibits the full list of those Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyteries, Synods, General Synods and General Assemblies, located in whole or in part in the South, whose existing Minutes may be found at the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina. As it is essentially a complete collection, the list will serve interested researchers as a first checklist of such bodies themselves.

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| | |
|---|---|
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| Alabama | PCUS |
| Appalachia | PCUS |
| Arkansas | PCUS |
| Baltimore | |
| Chesapeake | PCUS |
| Florida | PCUS |

The Minutes of

| | |
|---|---|
| The General Synod in the United States | PCUS |

The Minutes of the Synod of

| | |
|---|---|
| Georgia | PCUS |
| Kentucky | NS |
| Kentucky | PCUS |
| Louisiana | PCUS |
| Memphis | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Synod of

| | |
|---|---|
| Mid-America | PCUS |
| Mid-South | PCUS |
| Mississippi | NS |
| Mississippi | PCUS |
| Mississippi and South Alabama | PCUS |
| Missouri | PCUS |
| Nashville | PCUS |
| North Carolina | PCUS |
| Oklahoma | PCUS |
| Red River | PCUS |
| Snedecor Memorial | PCUS |
| South Carolina | PCUS |
| South Carolina and Georgia | PCUS |
| South Georgia and Florida | PCUS |
| Southeast | PCUS |
| Tennessee a | PCUS |
| Tennessee b | PCUS |
| Tennessee c | PCUS |
| Texas | PCUS |
| The Carolinas | PCUS |
| The Virginias | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Synod of

| | |
|---|---|
| Upper Missouri | PCUS |
| Virginia | PCUS |
| West Tennessee a | PCUS |
| West Tennessee b | PCUS |
| West Virginia | PCUS |

I. Primary Sources (continued)

B. Minutes

3. Presbyteries:

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Abingdon a | PCUS |
| Abingdon b | PCUS |
| Abingdon c | PCUS |
| Alabama | PCUS |
| Albemarle | PCUS |
| Amite | PCUS |
| Appomattox | PCUS |
| Arkansas | ARP |
| Arkansas | CPC |
| Arkansas | PCUS |
| Arkansas Union | PCUS |
| Asheville | PCUS |
| Athens | PCUS |
| Atlanta | PCUS |
| Augusta | PCUS |
| Bacon | CPC |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Bethel | PCUS |
| Birmingham | PCUS |
| Blue Ridge | PCUS |
| Bluestone | PCUS |
| Bonham | CPC |
| Bowling Green | PCUS |
| Brazos | PCUS |
| Brownwood | PCUS |
| Burrow | CPC |
| California | CPC |
| Catawba | ARP |
| Cauca Valley | CPC |
| Central Alabama | PCUS |
| Central Louisiana | PCUS |
| Central Mississippi | PCUS |
| Central Ohio | PCUS |
| Central Texas | PCUS |
| Charleston | PCUS |
| Charleston Union | PCUS |
| Cherokee | PCUS |
| Chesapeake | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Chickasaw | CPC |
| Chickasaw | PCUS |
| Cisco | PCUS |
| Clinton | NS |
| Clinton | PCUS |
| Colorado | CPC |
| Columbia | PCUS |
| Concord | PCUS |
| Congaree | PCUS |
| Cookeville | CPC |
| Covenant | PCUS |
| Creek Nation | PCUS |
| Cumberland | CPC |
| Cumberland | PCUS |
| Dallas | PCUS |
| Dallas-Bonham | CPC |

The Minutes of the Presbytery

| | |
|---|---|
| del Salvador | PCUS |

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Durant | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| East Alabama a | PCUS |
| East Alabama b | PCUS |
| East Arkansas | PCUS |
| East Hanover | PCUS |
| East Mississippi a | PCUS |
| East Mississippi b | PCUS |
| Eastern Texas | PCUS |
| Ebenezer | PCUS |
| El Paso | PCUS |
| Enoree | PCUS |
| Erie | |
| Ethel | PCUS |
| Everglades | PCUS |
| Fayetteville | PCUS |

The Minutes of the

| | |
|---|---|
| First Presbytery | ARP |

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| First South Carolina | PCUS |
| Flint River | PCUS |
| Florida | ARP |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Florida | PCUS |
| Fort Worth | PCUS |
| French Broad | PCUS |
| Georgia | ARP |
| Georgia | PCUS |
| Georgia-Carolina | PCUS |
| Good Hope | PCUS |
| Granville | PCUS |
| Greenbrier | PCUS |
| Greenville | CPC |
| Greenville | PCUS |
| Gregory | CPC |
| Guadalupe | CPC |
| Guerrant | PCUS |
| Guyandotte | PCUS |
| Hangchow | PCUS |
| Hanover | NS |
| Hanover a | PCUS |
| Hanover b | PCUS |
| Harmony | PCUS |
| Highland | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Highlands | PCUS |
| Hiwassee | PCUS |
| Holly Springs | PCUS |
| Holston | NS |
| Holston | PCUS |
| Hopewell | CPC |
| Hopewell | PCUS |
| Indian | PCUS |
| Indiana | CPC |
| John Calvin Union | PCUS |
| John Knox | PCUS |
| Kanawha | PCUS |
| Kansas | PCUS |
| Kansas City Union | PCUS |
| Kentucky | ARP |
| Kentucky | PCUS |
| King | CPC |
| Kings Mountain | PCUS |
| Kingston | PCUS |
| Knoxville | CPC |
| Knoxville | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Lafayette | PCUS |
| Lebanon | CPC |
| Leitchfield | CPC |
| Lexington | CPC |
| Lexington | PCUS |
| Lexington-Ebenezer | PCUS |
| Lexington South | PCUS |
| Little River | CPC |
| Louisiana | CPC |
| Louisiana | PCUS |
| Louisiana-Mississippi | PCUS |
| Louisville | PCUS |
| Louisville Union | PCUS |
| Macon | PCUS |
| Madison | CPC |
| Madison | PCUS |
| Mangum | PCUS |
| Marshall | CPC |
| Maryland | PCUS |
| Maury | PCUS |
| McAdow | CPC |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| McGee | CPC |
| Mecklenburg | PCUS |
| Mecklenburg a | PCUS |
| Mecklenburg b | PCUS |
| Memphis | ARP |
| Memphis | CPC |
| Memphis | PCUS |
| Memphis-Louisville | ARP |
| Meridian | PCUS |
| Miami a | PCUS |
| Miami b | PCUS |
| Mid-Texas | PCUS |
| Middle Tennessee | PCUS |
| Mississippi | PCUS |
| Mississippi Valley | ARP |
| Missouri | PCUS |
| Missouri Union | PCUS |
| Mobile | PCUS |
| Montgomery a | PCUS |
| Montgomery b | PCUS |
| Morganton | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Mound Prairie | CPC |
| Muhlenberg | PCUS |
| Nashville | PCUS |
| National Capital Union | PCUS |
| Nebraska | PCUS |
| New Orleans a | PCUS |
| New Orleans b | PCUS |
| New River | PCUS |
| Newton | PCUS |
| Norfolk | PCUS |
| North Alabama a | PCUS |
| North Alabama b | PCUS |
| North Alabama c | PCUS |
| North Alabama d | PCUS |
| North and South Carolina | PCUS |
| North Mississippi | PCUS |
| Obion | CPC |
| Obion | PCUS |
| Ohio | ARP |
| Ohio | PCUS |
| Oklahoma | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Orange | PCUS |
| Osage | PCUS |
| Ouachita | CPC |
| Ouachita | PCUS |
| Owensboro | CPC |
| Ozark | PCUS |
| Pacific | CPC |
| Paducah | PCUS |
| Palmyra | PCUS |
| Palo Duro Union | PCUS |
| Panhandle | PCUS |
| Paris | PCUS |
| Patapsco | PCUS |
| Pee Dee | PCUS |
| Piedmont | NS |
| Piedmont | PCUS |
| Pine Bluff | PCUS |
| Pines | PCUS |
| Platte | CPC |
| Platte | PCUS |
| Porter | RCPC |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Potomac a | PCUS |
| Potomac b | PCUS |
| Potomac c | PCUS |
| Potosi | PCUS |
| Princeton | CPC |
| Rappahannock | PCUS |
| Red Oak | CPC |
| Red River | CPC |
| Red River | PCUS |
| Redstone | |
| Richland | CPC |
| Richland | PCUS |
| Roanoke a | PCUS |
| Roanoke b | PCUS |
| St. Andrew | PCUS |
| St. Charles | PCUS |
| St. Johns | PCUS |
| St. Louis | PCUS |
| Salem | PCUS |
| Salt River | CPC |
| San Antonio | CPC |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Sao Paulo | PCUS |
| Savannah | PCUS |

The Minutes of the

| | |
|---|---|
| Second Presbytery | ARP |

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Second South Carolina | PCUS |
| Shawnee | PCUS |
| Shenandoah | PCUS |
| Sherman | PCUS |
| Shiloh | PCUS |
| South Alabama | PCUS |
| South Carolina | PCUS |
| South Carolina a | PCUS |
| South Carolina b | PCUS |
| South Louisiana | PCUS |
| South Mississippi | PCUS |
| South Oklahoma | PCUS |
| South Texas | PCUS |
| Southeast Missouri | PCUS |
| Southwest Georgia | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Southwest Missouri | PCUS |
| Southwest [Texas] | PCUS |
| Suwannee | PCUS |
| Tabor | PCUS |
| Talladega | PCUS |
| Tampa | PCUS |
| Tampico | ARP |
| Tehuacana | CPC |
| Tennessee | ARP |
| Tennessee | CPC |
| Tennessee-Alabama | ARP |
| Texas | ARP |
| Texas | CPC |
| Texas | PCUS |
| Texas-Mexican | PCUS |
| The District of Columbia | PCUS |
| Thomasville | PCUS |
| Tombeckbee | PCUS |
| Transylvania | PCUS |
| Transylvania Union | PCUS |
| Tres Rios | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Trinity | CPC |
| Tuscaloosa | PCUS |
| Tuscumbia a | PCUS |
| Tuscumbia b | PCUS |
| Tygart's Valley | PCUS |
| Union | |
| United of Kentucky | NS |
| Upper Missouri a | PCUS |
| Upper Missouri b | PCUS |
| Virginia | ARP |
| Wabash | PCUS |
| Waco | CPC |
| Washburn a | PCUS |
| Washburn b | PCUS |
| Washington | PCUS |
| West Hanover | PCUS |
| West Lexington | PCUS |
| West Prairie | CPC |
| West Tennessee | NS |
| West Tennessee | PCUS |
| Western Africa | PCUS |

[Continued]

The Minutes of the Presbytery of

| | |
|---|---|
| Western District | PCUS |
| Western Kentucky Union | PCUS |
| Western Texas | PCUS |
| Westminster | PCUS |
| White River | CPC |
| White Rock | CPC |
| Wilmington | PCUS |
| Winchester | NS |
| Winchester | PCUS |
| Winston-Salem | PCUS |
| Wyaconda | PCUS |
| Yazoo | PCUS |

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American Presbyterian
[Greenville, Tenn.]

American Presbyterian
[Nashville, Tenn.]

American Presbyterian and Theological Review

The American Presbyterian Review

American Quarterly Observer

American Quarterly Register

The American Sunday School Magazine [Philadelphia]

The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine and Journal of Education

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[New York]

Assembly Reporter

Assembly's Magazine

Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine
[Baltimore, Md.]

Bible Magazine

Biblical Repertory

The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review

The Biblical Repository and Quarterly Observer

The Bibliotheca Sacra, and Theological Eclectic

The Calvinistic Magazine
[Rogersville, Tenn.; Abingdon, Va.]

Central Christian Herald

Central Observer

Central Presbyterian

The Charleston Observer

Child's Paper
[American Tract Society, N. Y.]

The Christian Advocate
[Philadelphia]

Christian Examiner

Christian Herald
[New York; Caldwell]

Christian Instructor
[Newburgh, N. Y. and Philadelphia]

Christian Instructor
[Pittsburgh]

The Christian Intelligencer

Christian Intelligencer and Evangelical Guardian

Christian Magazine
[Philadelphia]

Christian Magazine of the South
[Columbia, S. C.]

Christian Observer
[A. Converse and Family]

Christian Spectator

Christian Work

The Christian Worker

Connecticut Evangelical Magazine

Cumberland Presbyterian Missionary

Due West Telescope

The Enquirer
[Albany]

Evangelical Guardian

Evangelical Intelligencer

Evangelical Recorder
[Auburn]

The Evangelical Repository

Family Visitor

The Foreign Missionary

The Foreign Missionary Chronicle

Free Christian Commonwealth
[Louisville]

The General Assembly's Missionary Magazine: or Evangelical Intelligencer

Guardian
[American Female Reformed Society]

The Home and Foreign Record of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

Home Missionary

The Home Missionary and American Pastor's Journal

The Hopkinsian Magazine
[Providence]

The Jersey Herald; Ecclesiastical Reporter and Voluntary Church Advocate

The Journal of Negro History

Journal of the American Temperance Union

Jubilee Journal

Juvenile Magazine

Juvenile Missionary Intelligencer

Ladies' Pearl

The Ladies' Repository
[Boston]

Literary and Evangelical Magazine
[Richmond]

Literary and Evangelical Register;
Containing Scientific, Evangelical,
Statistical and Political...
[Milton, Pennsylvania]

Literary and Theological Review

Magazin für Evang. Theologie und Kirche
[St. Louis]

Magazine of the German Reformed Church

Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church

Massachusetts Missionary Magazine

McComb's Presbyterian Almanac and Christian
Remembrancer

Memphis Christian Advocate

Mercersburg Review

Mercersburg Quarterly Review

The Messenger
[Lebanon; Chambersburg]

Millennial Harbinger

The Missionary
[Louisville]

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[PCCSA; PCUS]

The Missionary Chronicle

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[Philadelphia]

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[New York]

The National Preacher, or Original Monthly Sermons from Living Ministers
[New York]

New Brunswick Review

The New Englander
[New Haven, Conn.]

New York Evangelist

The New York Missionary Magazine and Repository of Religious Intelligence

New York Observer
[called Observer and Chronicle, 1826; merged into Christian Work]

New York Religious Chronicle
[merged with New York Observer]

New York Weekly Witness

North Carolina Presbyterian

North Carolina Telegraph

Oglethorpe University Magazine

The Old School Presbyterian
[St. Louis]

The Pamphleteer

The Panoplist

The Panoplist and Missionary Herald

The Panoplist and Missionary Magazine

The Pedobaptist

Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography

Penny Magazine

Philadelphia Observer

Philadelphian
[becomes Philadelphia Observer]

Pittsburgh Recorder

The Preacher

Presbyterial Critic and Bi-Monthly Review

Presbyterial Critic and Monthly Review

Presbyterian
[Philadelphia]

Presbyterian Advocate
[Lexington]

Presbyterian Almanac

Presbyterian Casket

Presbyterian Expositor

Presbyterian Herald
[Louisville]

Presbyterian Herald
[Louisville, Ky. Daily]

Presbyterian Index
[Mobile and New Orleans]

Presbyterian Magazine
[Philadelphia; became Christian Advocate]

Presbyterian Monthly Record

The Presbyterian of Our Union

Presbyterian of the West
[Cincinnati]

Presbyterian Preacher
[Fayetteville, N. C.; was Virginia and North Carolina Presbyterian Preacher, 1828]

Presbyterian Preacher
[Pittsburg]

The Presbyterian Quarterly

The Presbyterian Quarterly Review
[Philadelphia; united with the American Theological Review]

Presbyterian Review and Religious Journal

Presbyterian Sabbath School Visitor

Presbyterian Standard

The Presbyterian Treasury of Education, Religion, and General Intelligence
[Philadelphia]

Presbyterian Witness
[Cincinnati]

Presbyterian Witness
[Knoxville and Bristol]

Presbyterian's Armory

Presbytery Reporter

Princeton Magazine

The Princeton Review
[Princeton, N. J.]

Princeton Theological Seminary Necrological Reports

Prison Discipline Society Annual Report

Protestant and Herald

Protestant Banner

Protestant Quarterly Review

Pulpit and Rostrum

The Pulpit of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church [Cincinnati]

The Quarterly Christian Spectator

The Quarterly Journal of the American Education Society

Quarterly Register

Quarterly Register and Journal of the American Education Society

The Quarterly Register of the American Education Society

Quarterly Reporter of the YMCA in North America

The Quarterly Review of the American Protestant Association [Philadelphia]

Quarterly Theological Review

The Record [Jonesboro]

Reformed Church in the United States Almanac and Year Book

Reformed Church Messenger

Reformed Church Review

Reformed Presbyterian
[Clay Center]

Reformed Presbyterian
[combines with Covenanter to become Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter]

Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter
[was Covenanter and Reformed Presbyterian]

Reformed Presbyterian Magazine

Reformed Presbyterian Witness

Religious Advocate and Christian Monitor

Religious Ark

Religious Examiner

The Religious Intelligencer
[New Haven]

Religious Monitor
[became Evangelical Repository]

Religious Remembrancer

Religious Telegraph and Observer

Revivalist

The Richmond Eclectic

Richmond Family Visitor

The Sailor's Magazine and Naval Journal
[American Seaman's Friend Society]

The Saint Louis Presbyterian

The Scottish Presbyterian
[Louisville]

Select Journal of Foreign Periodical Literature

Select Reviews, and Spirit of the Foreign Magazines

Series of Tracts

Soldier's Visitor

South-Carolina Temperance Advocate

Southern Christian Herald

Southern Christian Sentinel

The Southern Evangelical Intelligencer
[Charleston]

Southern Home
[Charlotte]

The Southern Magazine
[Southern Historical Society, Balto.]

Southern Presbyterian

The Southern Presbyterian Review

The Southern Quarterly Review
[Charleston]

Southern Religious Telegraph

Southwestern Presbyterian

The Spirit of the Pilgrims
[Boston]

Spirit of the XIX. Century
[Baltimore, Md.]

Staunton Spectator

The Sunday Magazine

Sunday Morning
[Nashville, CPC]

Sunday-School Journal
[American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia]

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Theological Magazine

Theological Magazine of the Evangelical Synod of North America
[St. Louis]

Theological Medium

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True Christian Commonwealth
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True Witness

Truth: or Testimony for Christ
[St. Louis]

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[Elberfield]

Western Literary Messenger
[Buffalo]

Western Luminary
[united with Cincinnati Journal]

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